NINTENDO POWER®

Reviews Blowout! • Punch-Out!! • Mario & Luigi RPG 3 • Sin & Punishment 2 • Fire Emblem: Shadow Dragon • Henry Hatsworth

236
HOLIDAY 2008
SUBSCRIBER EDITION

EXPLORE
EVERYTHING.

Wii
NINTENDO DS
Games for Windows
XBOX 360 LIVE

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Blood
Mild Language
Mild Suggestive Themes
Violence

PlayStation 2
PLAYSTATION 3

*screens and features from Wii version

STOP AT
NOTHING.

UNLOCK HIDDEN SECRETS OF THE UNDERWORLD USING THE EXCLUSIVE MULTI-TOOL DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY FOR THE Wii REMOTE™.

DEFEAT YOUR ENEMIES IN COMBAT USING THE Wii™ REMOTE FOR PRECISION AIMING.

EXPLORE EPIC AND UNKNOWN WORLDS WITHIN THAILAND, MEXICO, THE ARCTIC AND MORE.

TOMB RAIDER™
UNDERWORLD

WWW.TOMBRAIDER.COM

CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

eidos

Tomb Raider: Underworld © Eidos Interactive Limited 2008. Developed by Crystal Dynamics Inc. Co-published by Eidos, Inc. and Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment, a division of Warner Bros. Home Entertainment Inc. Tomb Raider, Tomb Raider: Underworld, Crystal Dynamics, the Crystal Dynamics logo, Eidos, and the Eidos logo are trademarks of Eidos Interactive Limited. All rights reserved. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION" and "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Microsoft, Windows, the Windows Vista Start button, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies, and 'Games for Windows' and the Windows Vista Start button logo are used under license from Microsoft. Wii and Nintendo DS are trademarks of Nintendo. ©2006 Nintendo. The rating icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

WBIE LOGO, WB SHIELD: ™ & © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.
(s08)

© 2008 Electronic Arts Inc. The EA logo, the MySims logo and MySims are trademarks or registered trademarks of Electronic Arts Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries. All rights reserved. Wii and DS are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Comic Mischief

Wii
NINTENDO DS

IN STORES NOW
MySims™ Kingdom for the Wii™ and Nintendo DS™.
The original MySims also available on PC. **MySims.com**

EA
COME PLAY WITH US.
New lands and new adventures in the MySims world.
NINTENDO DS
NEW! MySims Kingdom
Wii
NEW! MySims Kingdom
E
EA

UNCOVER THE SECRETS
OF THE PAST TO
SAVE THE FUTURE

TALES OF SYMPHONIA®
Dawn of the New World™

In the aftermath of the world regeneration, a new conflict awaits. A young boy confronts the heroes of the past to save a world on the brink of destruction.

Phoenix Rush
2 Hits
522 Damage
409
294
125

Engage in fast-paced real-time battles utilizing the powers of the elements

Form pacts with, evolve and fight alongside over 200 unique monsters

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Alcohol Reference
Fantasy Violence
Mild Language
Suggestive Themes

Wii™

Tales 10th ANNIVERSARY

www.TalesRPG.com

BANDAI NAMCO Games™

Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo. Tales of Symphonia®: Dawn of the New World™ & © 2003-2008 NAMCO BANDAI Games Inc. © Kosuke Fujishima The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association. All other trademarks and trade names are the property of their respective owners.

NINTENDO POWER

CONTENTS

HOLIDAY 2008

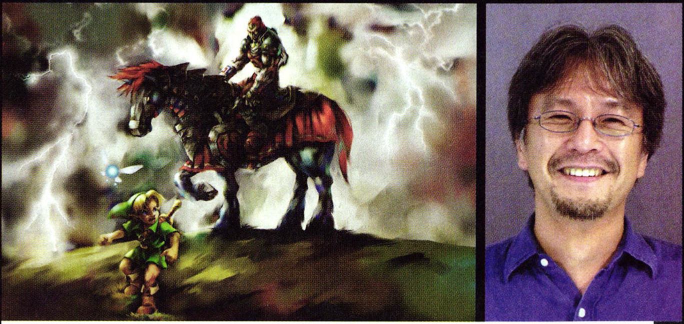
FEATURES

Test of Time 36
The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time: great game or greatest game? We celebrate the beloved adventure's 10-year anniversary by interviewing Zelda mastermind Eiji Aonuma.

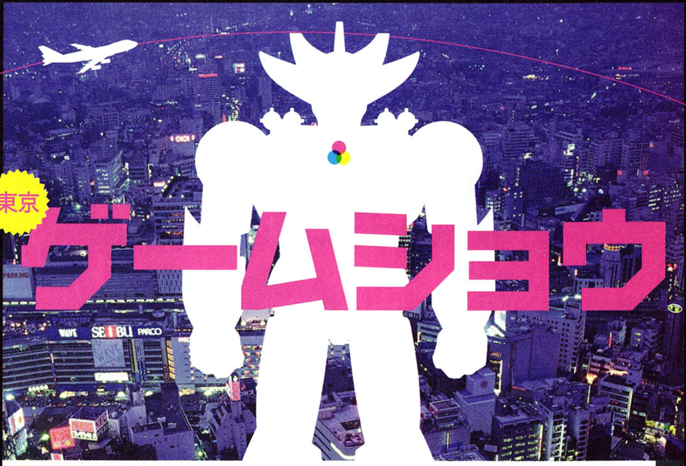
It Came From Japan 44
Your NP editors journeyed across the globe to bring you the latest and greatest info from the 2008 Tokyo Game Show, including No More Heroes 2, Kingdom Hearts 358/2 Days, Tenchu 4, and more!

A Most Gentlemanly Escapade 58
I say, old boy! Henry Hatsworth in the Puzzling Adventure is shaping up as a most fortuitous DS endeavor!

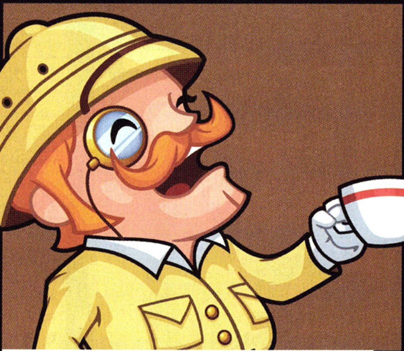
The Gamers' (Non-Game) Holiday Gift Guide 60
It wouldn't be a holiday issue without a holiday gift guide! Instead of looking at the games you already know about, however, we focus on other Nintendo-related goodies—books, clothes, toys, statues, and more—to give to or receive from your loved ones.



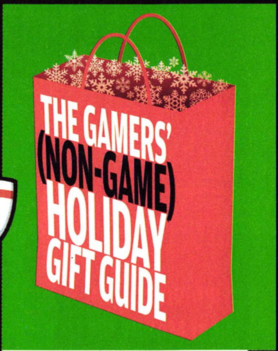
THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME 10TH ANNIVERSARY 36



TOKYO GAME SHOW REPORT 44



HENRY HATSWORTH IN THE PUZZLING ADVENTURE 58


THE GAMERS' (NON-GAME) HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE 60

CONTENTS

HOLIDAY 2008

DEPARTMENTS

Pulse 10

News 16

Wii Channels 24

Previews 30
- Blue Dragon Plus 32
- Deadly Creatures 31
- Fire Emblem: Shadow Dragon 30
- Onechanbara: Bikini Zombie Slayers 32
- Puzzle Kingdoms 34
- Rock Band 2 34

THE LAST CHAPTER!

20 Years of Nintendo Power 64

Power Profiles 66

Playback 70

Sweepstakes 72

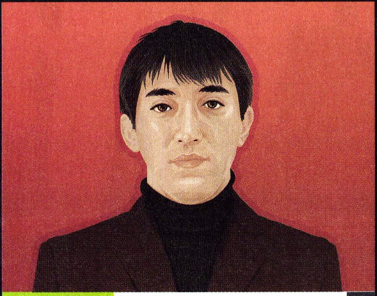
Reviews 75
- Age of Empires: Mythologies 84
- Animal Crossing: City Folk 76
- Castlevania Judgment 77
- Chrono Trigger 82
- Cooking Mama World Kitchen 80
- Gauntlet 82
- Guitar Hero World Tour 80
- Luminous Arc 2 88
- Metal Slug 7 80
- Monster Lab (DS) 87
- Monster Lab (Wii) 88
- Moon 84
- Mushroom Men: Rise of the Fungi 86
- Mushroom Men: The Spore Wars 84
- Need for Speed Undercover 87
- Neopets Puzzle Adventure 87
- Pokémon Ranger: Shadows of Almia 86
- Rayman Raving Rabbids TV Party 86
- Rygar: The Battle of Argus 77
- Shaun White Snowboarding: Road Trip 84
- Sonic Unleashed 80
- Spider-Man: Web of Shadows 82
- Star Wars The Clone Wars: Jedi Alliance 86
- Star Wars The Clone Wars: Lightsaber Duels 89
- Tales of Symphonia: Dawn of the New World 78
- Tomb Raider Underworld 88
- WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2009 (DS) 89
- WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2009 (Wii) 87

Community 94

Next Month 96

NEWS PUNCH-OUT!! 16

PREVIEW FIRE EMBLEM: SHADOW DRAGON 30



POWER PROFILES SHINJI MIKAMI 66

REVIEW ANIMAL CROSSING: CITY FOLK 76

GAME INDEX

7th Dragon (DS)	50
Age of Empires: Mythologies (DS)	84
Animal Crossing: City Folk (Wii)	76
Arc Rise Fantasia (Wii)	50
Art Style: Cubello (WW)	26
Art Style: Orbient (WW)	26
Blue Dragon Plus (DS)	32
Bomberman Blast (WW)	26
Castlevania Judgment (Wii)	77
Cave Story (WW)	24
Chocobo to Mahou no Ehon: Majo to Shoujo to Gonin no Yuusha (DS)	55
Chrono Trigger (DS)	82
Cooking Mama World Kitchen (Wii)	80
Deadly Creatures (Wii)	31
Digital Champ Battle Boxing (VC)	28
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Echoes of Time (Wii, DS)	18
Fire Emblem: Shadow Dragon (DS)	30
Fragile (Wii)	52
Gardening Mama (DS)	50
Gauntlet (DS)	82
Gradius II: Gofer no Yabou (VC)	28
Gradius ReBirth (WW)	25
Guitar Hero World Tour (Wii)	80
Gyakuten Kenji (DS)	50
Help Wanted (Wii)	18
Henry Hatsworth in the Puzzling Adventure (DS)	58
High Voltage Hot Rod Show (WW)	26
The Incredible Maze (WW)	26
Infinite Space (DS)	52
Kimino Yusha (DS)	49
Kingdom Hearts 358/2 Days (DS)	45
Klonoa: Door to Phantomile (Wii)	45
Legacy of Ys: Books I & II (DS)	19
The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time (N64)	36
Let's Tap (Wii)	54
Little King's Story (Wii)	55
Little Magician's Magic Adventure (DS)	50
Luminous Arc 2 (DS)	88
Madstone (WW)	26
MadWorld (Wii)	55
Marble Saga: Kororinpa (Wii)	20
Mario & Luigi 3 (DS)	18
Mario Golf (VC)	28
Metal Slug 7 (DS)	80
Midnight Bowling (WW)	26
Mole Mania (GB)	70
Monster Hunter 3 (Wii)	54
Monster Lab (DS)	87
Monster Lab (Wii)	88
Moon (DS)	84
Muramasa: The Demon Blade (Wii)	52
Mushroom Men: Rise of the Fungi (DS)	86
Mushroom Men: The Spore Wars (Wii)	84
My World, My Way (DS)	19
Need for Speed Undercover (Wii)	87
Neopets Puzzle Adventure (DS)	87
No More Heroes: Desperate Struggle (Wii)	46
Onechanbara: Bikini Zombie Slayers (Wii)	32
Phantasy Star Ø (DS)	52
Pokémon Ranger: Shadows of Almia (DS)	86
Pool Revolution: Cue Sports (WW)	25
Professor Layton and the Last Time Travel (DS)	45
Punch-Out!! (Wii)	16
Puzzle Kingdoms (Wii, DS)	34
Rayman Raving Rabbids TV Party (Wii)	86
Rock Band 2 (Wii)	34
Rygar: The Battle of Argus (Wii)	77
Secret of Mana (VC)	28
Shaun White Snowboarding: Road Trip (Wii)	84
Shining Force Feather (DS)	45
Shining Force II (VC)	28
Sin and Punishment 2 (Wii)	17
Sonic Unleashed (Wii)	80
Spider-Man: Web of Shadows (Wii)	82
Star Wars The Clone Wars: Jedi Alliance (DS)	86
Star Wars The Clone Wars: Lightsaber Duels (Wii)	89
Street Fighter II: Special Champion Edition (VC)	28
Super Turrican 2 (VC)	28
Tales of Symphonia: Dawn of the New World (Wii)	78
Tatsunoko vs. Capcom (Wii)	45
Tenchu 4: Art of the Ninja (Wii)	48
Tetris Party (WW)	26
Tomb Raider Underworld (Wii)	88
Valkyrie Profile: Toga o Seoumono (DS)	49
World of Goo (WW)	26
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2009 (DS)	89
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2009 (Wii)	87

DS = NINTENDO DS
N64 = NINTENDO 64
GB = GAME BOY
VC = VIRTUAL CONSOLE
Wii = Wii
WW = WiiWare

NEWS 🟥
CHANNELS 🟦
PREVIEW ⬛
FEATURE ▨
PLAYBACK 🟨
REVIEW 🟦

Deca Sports™
10 Complete Sporting Events
Available Now!
$29.99
2-4 Person Multiplayer Action

EVERYONE
E
Visit www.esrb.org for more ratings information.
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

Wii™

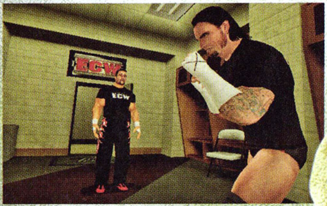
HUDSON
www.decasports.com

© 2008 HUDSON SOFT The trademark of "Deca Sports" is registered by HUDSON SOFT CO., LTD. All Rights Reserved. adidas, the 3-Stripes trade mark and the 3-Bars logo are registered trade marks of the adidas Group, used with permission. Teamgeist is a trade mark of the adidas Group, used with permission. All other trademarks are the property of their respective companies. Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2007 Nintendo. The rating icon is a registered trade mark of the Entertainment Software Association. Published by Hudson Entertainment, Inc.

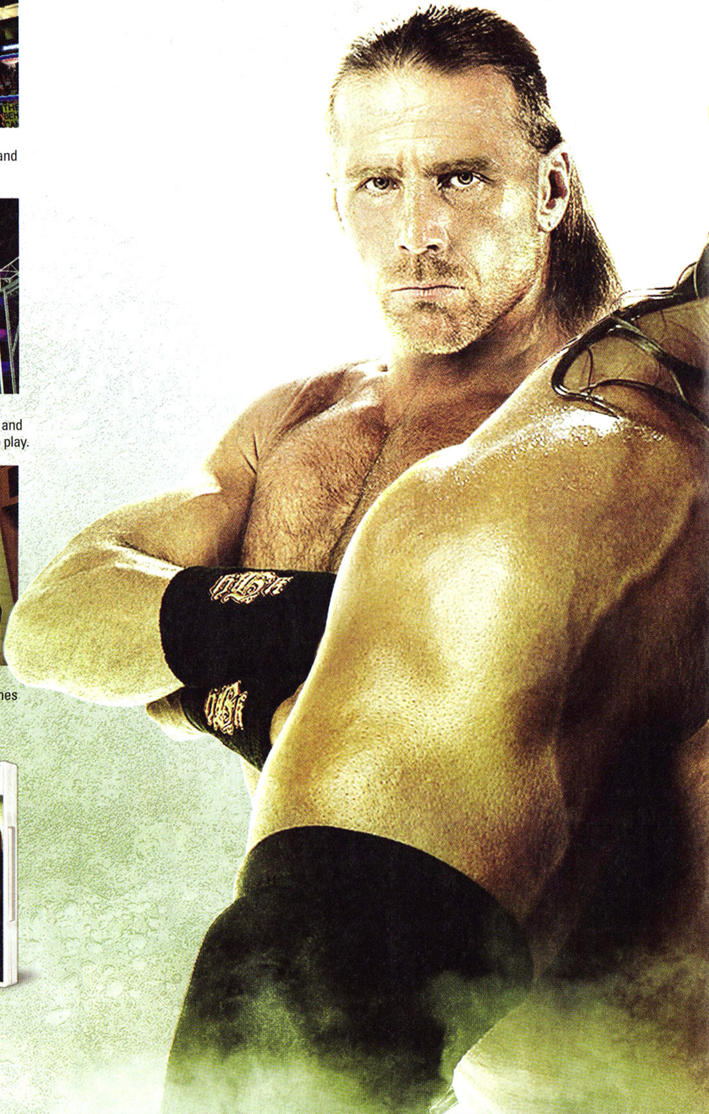
In WWE, the only person you can rely on, other than yourself, is your partner. You have each other's backs, and together, you can accomplish more than you ever could on your own.

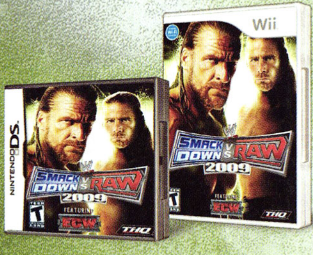
Interactive Entrances and Victory Scenes:
Control your favorite Superstar as you enter the ring and decide your opponent's fate after the match.

New Match Types:
With new match types like Royal Rumble, TLC, Tables and Steel Cage showdowns, there are even more ways to play.



Road to WrestleMania™:
An all-new season mode features customized storylines including the first-ever co-op tag team storyline.





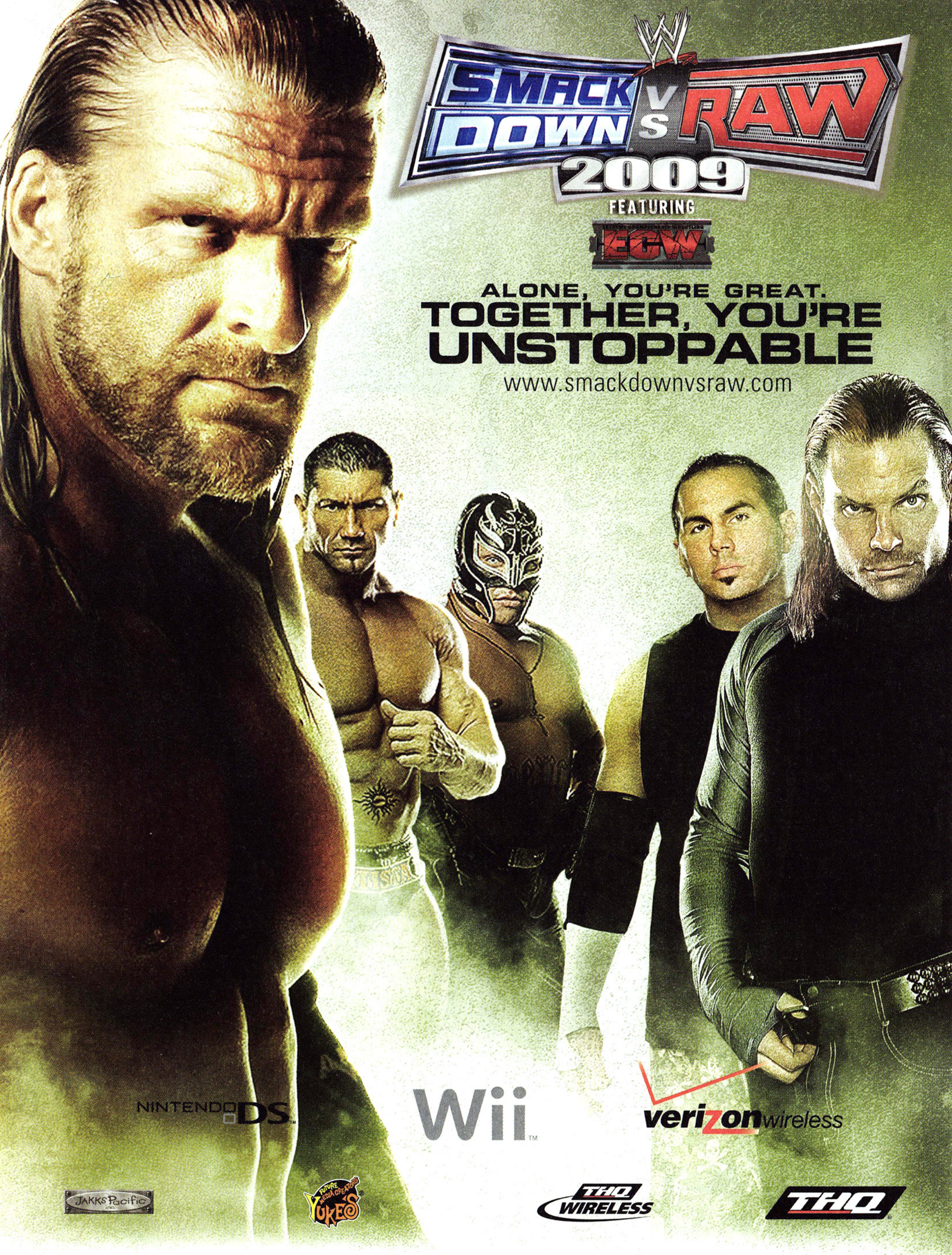
TEEN ™
T
Blood
Mild Language
Suggestive Themes
Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

ONLINE GAMEPLAY*: CHALLENGE FRIENDS AND FOES FROM AROUND THE WORLD ONLINE.
PLUS: UPDATED ROSTER, AUTHENTIC BACKSTAGE AREAS, NEW WEAPONS AND MORE!

All WWE programming, talent names, images, likenesses, slogans, wrestling moves, trademarks, logos and copyrights are the exclusive property of World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc. and its subsidiaries. All other trademarks, logos and copyrights are the property of their respective owners. © 2008 World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

© 2008 THQ/JAKKS Pacific, LLC. Used under exclusive license by THQ/JAKKS Pacific, LLC. JAKKS Pacific and the JAKKS Pacific logo are trademarks of JAKKS Pacific, Inc. Developed by YUKE'S Co., Ltd. YUKE'S Co., Ltd. and its logo are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of YUKE'S Co., Ltd. THQ and the THQ logo are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of THQ Inc. All Rights Reserved. Wii and Nintendo DS are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo. © 2008 Verizon Wireless and the Verizon Wireless logos are trademarks of Verizon Trademark Services LLC. Charges apply; coverage not available everywhere. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

*Feature only available on Wii.


SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2009
FEATURING
ECW
ALONE, YOU'RE GREAT.
TOGETHER, YOU'RE UNSTOPPABLE
www.smackdownvsraw.com
NINTENDO DS
Wii
verizonwireless
JAKKS Pacific
YUKE'S
THQ WIRELESS
THQ

Pulse

How Great was '08?

Chris Slate

2008 might go down as my favorite year. To start with, Nintendo Power celebrated two full decades of publication and its first full year with a new publisher. It was also a history-making period for Nintendo, in which sales of Wii and Nintendo DS continued to break records. And personally speaking, it was the year in which I got my dream job, getting to work on my favorite magazine month in and month out.

2008 also saw its share of new games that are destined to become classics, most notably Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Mario Kart Wii, and Animal Crossing: City Folk (my personal list would also include No More Heroes and Wario Land: Shake It!). 2009 will have a tough act to follow, but then again, we're seeing some signs that it's got a good shot (more on that in 30 days). Thanks so much to all of you who came along for the ride. As always, the readers continue to be the heart and soul of Nintendo Power, year after year.

CHRIS SLATE **EDITOR IN CHIEF**

DS
RPG HITS! Back-to-back features on fan-favorites Chrono Trigger & Suikoden: Tierkreis
NINTENDO POWER
THE NEXT WII CRAZE IS HERE!
Wii MUSIC
POKÉMON RANGER: SHADOWS OF ALMIA
ANIMAL CROSSING: CITY FOLK

V235 DECEMBER 2008

Chris Slate here, back once again to answer your letters between gulps of teeth-rotting soda. Before we get to this month's mail, I have a special request: take a look into your crystal ball and send me what you think will be next year's big headlines. Write them like an eye-grabbing front-page blurb, send 'em to the address on pg. 12, and we'll print the best ones!

LETTERS

TEASING ZELDA

How dare you put a giant, awesome picture of Link fighting Ganondorf on Vol. 235's Next Month page?! When I first saw it, I almost had a heart attack because I thought you'd be talking about a brand-new Zelda game! This obviously wasn't the case, but my point is, don't just throw around the Zelda pictures so haphazardly—my body can't take the excitement. **—(NO NAME GIVEN)**

Sorry for the shock! We're so used to the old Ocarina artwork that it never occurred to us that people might mistake it for something else. We'll make it up to you with big coverage of the next Zelda game whenever it comes along.

2-D OR NOT 2-D

I loathe all these nostalgia junkies yakking about the need for more 2-D Marios, Metroids, and Zeldas, while forgetting about masterpieces like Super Mario 64, Metroid Prime, and The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time. Those were some of the most fantastic games of all time, and people want those series to go backwards?! I hope this letter will put some sense into their heads. **—KING VROND OF AZURNDIA**

It's not that 2-D fans don't want 3-D games; most of them would prefer both. I'll take a sequel to Super Mario Galaxy and Super Mario World, please!

FROG OR FROGLET?

I usually don't write in, but I thought it was necessary to respond to the letter from Claire W. in Vol. 235. I agree with Chris—if male gamers don't respect your skills, all you can do is beat them every time. Even though I'm a guy gamer, I still believe that girls love games, too. By the way, some of my favorite game characters are girls, such as Slippy and Samus. So, don't worry about jerks like that. **—SLIPPY**

I'm sure that Claire and other female gamers appreciate the support, but I have to correct you on something: Slippy is a dude. And if you're also a dude—but thought Slippy was a girl—why did you name yourself after "her?" You're quite a mystery, sir.

CO-OP COUPLE

My wife and I really enjoyed co-op RPGs like Baldur's Gate during our PS2 days, and we were wondering if you could point us toward any good Wii co-op RPGs. **—JUSTIN**

No action-RPGs come to mind, but Wii has some good co-op games in other genres. Doubles zombie blasting is fun in Resident Evil: Umbrella Chronicles, dual surgeons is more fun than you'd think in Trauma Center: New Blood, you could jam together in Guitar Hero III, race as a team in Mario Kart Wii, or join up for Super Mario Galaxy's unique team play. Hopefully one of those is up your alley.

Lately I've been tugged away to other systems by first-person shooters, but I was excited to see The Conduit in Vol. 233's "Big 15" games feature—it looks really cool! This may be the game to pull me back. If Nintendo makes another Metroid or Zelda, I'll be back for sure. —**(NO NAME GIVEN)**

Based on our time spent with The Conduit so far, it has a shot at becoming the new high mark for first-person shooters on Wii—and that would mean topping the amazing Metroid Prime 3! Keep your fingers crossed while we wait to test a final version. Oh, and a new Zelda is officially in the works, so welcome back!

The Conduit
02

DO A BARREL ROLL!

My brother-in-law and I downright *love* Star Fox 64, and we decided that it would be awesome if this game was remade for Wii with updated graphics, co-op gameplay, and motion-sensitive controls, but with the same amazing levels. You could hold the Wii remote like a joystick to simulate flying a jet, use the nunchuk's Control Stick, or swap in a GameCube or classic controller. Just thinking about it is awesome. "Do a barrel roll!" —**N64 LOVER**

This is our second letter pining for a Wii Star Fox game in as many months—Fox fever is runnin' wild! Star Fox 64 is, in my opinion, the series' best game by far. Since it hasn't been topped in over a decade, I agree that a Wii remake, with the kinds of controls you describe, would be about the coolest thing a Fox fan could hope for.

NOOOOOOOO!

Nintendo should partner with Lucasfilm to make an animated Star Fox movie! With Lucasfilm's space-battle-movie expertise and Nintendo's storyline and music skills, it could be the greatest animated movie of all time! —**MEKTAR**

Entrusting Fox McCloud to the studio responsible for Howard the Duck? You're a braver man than I am, Mektar.

A Star Fox movie *could* be cool, Mektar—but only in the right hands.

BREAKING THE SCALE

Do you guys think that a game could one day come along that is so incredibly awesome that you simply *have* to break the rating system and give it a 10.5? I know it sounds crazy because every game has its flaws, but don't we all think that some game will come out and be better than perfect? —**DAVID K.**

I've been tempted a couple of times—breaking the reviews scale would certainly create excitement and put an even bigger spotlight on a great game. But pulling a stunt like that could cause consistency problems down the road. Once you establish 10.5 as the new high point, you're pressured to go there again when a similarly great game comes along. On a side note, we don't consider a 10 to mean that a game is perfect; we simply define it as our highest recommendation.

CLEARING THINGS UP

Is it true that the upcoming Wii MotionPlus peripheral won't be backward-compatible with current Wii titles? If so, then why? If the add-on only works with new games, it may come back to haunt Nintendo since some people may not feel like buying the Wii MotionPlus. —**SEAN M.**

Since games have to be specifically designed to take advantage of the Wii MotionPlus, it's true that older titles won't play any differently with the peripheral—there's just no way around that. I expect most Wii owners will pick it up, though. Not only does it come bundled with Wii Sports Resort, which is sure to sell a bajillion copies, but the peripheral will also be for sale on its own for what Nintendo reps say will be a very affordable price.

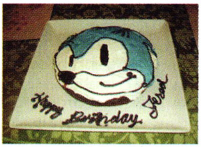
CUTTING THROUGH

I've noticed that the Wii lineup is missing a good swordfighting game. One game that I truly loved was Square's Bushido Blade for the original PlayStation. A game like that would be a perfect fit for Wii. —**SEAN M.**

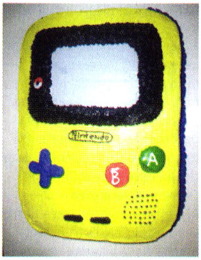
What a coincidence—the guys here at the office were just talking about how great it would be to bring that series to Wii! The original game's strategic one-hit, one-kill sword duels could be something really special with the Wii remote. Don't get your hopes up, but we'll start pestering Square Enix.

THE GREAT BAKE-OFF

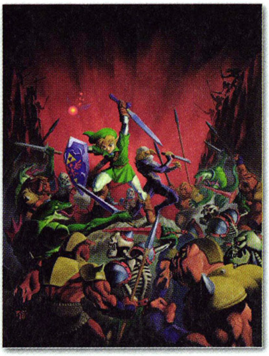
Your magazine has featured many Nintendo-themed cakes in the past, but as a member of P.W.W.2.T.N.P.I.S.V. (People Who Want to Turn Nintendo Power into Sega Visions), I'm going to infiltrate this issue with my Sonic cake! Remember, Slate: the P.W.W.2.T.N.P.I.S.V. won't rest until we change Nintendo Power into Sega Visions! Bwahahaha! —**SGT. SPRINKLES**



What the—! The power of the Sonic cake is too...much.... Need emergency Nintendo cake....



Ah, that's the stuff. I owe you one, Christina F.



It's hard to believe that it's been 10 years since Ocarina of Time came out! I was only 6 when I came home from school to find the golden box sitting on the dining-room table. I remember the triumph I felt at beating the first dungeon, the excitement I got from stealing Epona from Ingo, and the shock of finding out that Sheik was really Zelda. Because of this one game, I became a true Nintendo fan and have stayed that way ever since. **—FARORE**

REMEMBERING THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME

I had sold my Nintendo 64 just before Ocarina of Time came out, but after seeing that game, I bought a new one. I loved the complex story, the cool enemies, and the amusing screams that Link made during some of the cinematics. I felt the need to complete every little part of the game, from finding the Heart Containers to catching the Loach. My most frustrating memory was trying to find all of the Skulltulas without knowing that I could use the roll move to shake trees and break boxes. **—JAPUNTICH**

I remember how I just sat and listened to the opening music, and how the Shadow Temple was so scary (it gave me nightmares of being chased by Floormasters). I loved the twists in the story, such as how getting the Zora's Sapphire meant that you were engaged to Ruto. And the seven-year gap from being a child to an adult was perfectly played out. I've played Ocarina hundreds of times and to this day I challenge other people to test my knowledge of the game—I've never been proven wrong. Recently I started the Three-Heart Challenge, where I'll try to beat the game with only three hearts. Thank you, Nintendo, for making one of the best games ever. I'll pass Ocarina of Time on to my kids so they can enjoy the fruits of your labors. **—ADAM M.**

I used to have my desperate second-grade friends pay me to beat parts of Ocarina of Time for them. I'd use tricks to get extra cash, like beating a boss and skipping the heart container so that I could get a few more quarters to go back and get it. I really learned a lot about that game. To this day, I haven't found anyone else who knows that by staying in the corner during the Water Temple boss fight, you are safely out of its range. Ocarina of Time is still the best game ever. It made me a loyal Zelda fan, filling me with the need to get every figurine in Wind Waker and beat all 64 levels of the RollGoal game in Twilight Princess. **—EL CHU**

What I remember the most from Ocarina of Time is when I went to Kakariko Village and met the people who had been turned into spiders. I was pretty young at the time, and it creeped me out...but now I think it's pretty funny. **—(NO NAME GIVEN)**

Back in 1999, my friend's house burned down and one of the only things he saved was his Ocarina of Time cartridge. He decided to give it to me because he knew I was a big Nintendo fan and had an N64. And so, I became a Zelda fan. I could never figure out how to open Jabu-Jabu's mouth and eventually had to sell my N64 without having beaten the game. However, I got another chance years later when I bought The Legend of Zelda: Collector's Edition for GameCube. I almost cried when I finally beat the game. **—ZEKE M.**

Thanks to everyone who wrote in to share your memories of this timeless classic. A scene that really stands out for me occurs early in the game, inside the Deku Tree, where you had to switch to the game's new first-person view to fire your slingshot at a target above the door. It was a traditional Zelda puzzle, totally reinvigorated by Ocarina's new play mechanics and 3-D perspective. From that point on, anything felt possible, which to me is the essence of the Zelda series.

PLEASE WRITE US

pulse@nintendopower.com

Or via carrier pigeon at

Nintendo Power/Pulse
c/o Future US
1000 Marina Blvd.
STE 510
Brisbane, CA 94005

TIPS FOR GETTING YOUR LETTER PUBLISHED:

Understand that the magazine staff is separate from Nintendo; we don't make the games.

Don't send links to game coverage on the Web—trust us; we see it all.

Don't ask about the status of upcoming games, or whether certain games will be announced; if we have that info, we'll always tell you.

NINTENDO POWER

TIME BANDITS

EDITOR IN CHIEF **Chris Slate**
EXECUTIVE EDITOR **Steve Thomason**
SENIOR EDITOR **Chris Hoffman**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR **Justin Cheng**
ART DIRECTOR **Chris Imlay**
CONTRIBUTING DESIGNER **Rebekah Lane**
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS **Amanda Glasser, Andrew Hayward, Carolyn Gunderson, Tom Holoien, Kaiser Hwang, Casey Loe, Chris Shepperd, George Sinfield, David F. Smith, Phil Theobald**
COPY EDITOR **Candace Cunningham**
LICENSING MANAGER **Frances Wall Jha**
EDITOR-AT-LARGE **Scott Pelland**

BUSINESS
PUBLISHER **Kelley Corten, 650-745-9225, kcorten@futureus.com**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR **David Cooper 646-723-5447, dcooper@futureus.com**
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR - GAMES GROUP **Nate Hunt, 562-983-8004, nhunt@futureus.com**
REGIONAL SALES DIRECTOR (Bay Area) **Christina Perez, 206-417-3315, cperez@futureus.com**
REGIONAL SALES DIRECTOR (Southwest) **Isaac Uguy, 949-218-0981, luguy@futureus.com**
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE **Benjamin Alessio 650-238-2324, balessio@futureus.com**
DIRECTOR, CORPORATE SALES & MARKETING **Jim Schiekofer, 646-723-5410, jschiekofer@futureus.com**
CORP. SALES MIDWEST MANAGER **Jodi Sosna 212-217-1358, jsosna@futureus.com**
CORP. SALES WEST MANAGER **Nadine Weiss 323-493-5929, nweiss@futureus.com**
AD PROJECT MANAGER **Rhoda Ushijima 650-238-2474, rushijima@futureus.com**
ADVERTISING COORDINATOR **Arthur St. Germain, 650-238-2571, astgermain@futureus.com**
MARKETING MANAGER **Andrea Recio-Ang, arecio-ang@futureus.com**

PRODUCTION
PRODUCTION COORDINATOR **Larry Briseno**
PRINT ORDER COORDINATOR **Jennifer Lim**

CIRCULATION
GROUP CIRCULATION DIRECTOR **Peter Kelly**
NEWSSTAND DIRECTOR **Bill Shewey**
ONLINE CONSUMER MARKETING MANAGER **Betsy Wong**
BILLING & RENEWAL MANAGER **Mike Hill**
FULFILLMENT MANAGER **Angi Martinez**
DIRECT MARKETING SPECIALIST **Alexandra Davydova**
CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER **Mike Manrique**
NEWSSTAND COORDINATOR **Alex Guzman**

FUTURE US, Inc.
4000 Shoreline Court,
Ste 400, South San
Francisco, CA 94080
www.futureus-inc.com

PRESIDENT **Jonathan Simpson-Bint**
VICE PRESIDENT/CFO **John Sutton**
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT/PUBLISHING DIRECTOR **Simon Whitcombe**
VICE PRESIDENT/PUBLISHING DIRECTOR **Stacey Levy**
VICE PRESIDENT, INTERNET DEVELOPMENT **Tyson Daugherty**
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR/BUS. DEV. **Dave Barrow**
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR/GAMES GROUP **Stephen Pierce**
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR/MUSIC **Brad Tolinski**
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES **Nancy Durlester**
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR **Richie Lesovoy**

FUTURE PLC
30 Monmouth St., Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW, England
www.futureplc.com
Tel +44 1225 442244
www.futureplc.com

NON-EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN: Roger Parry
CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Stevie Spring
GROUP FINANCE DIRECTOR: John Bowman

Nintendo Power Customer Care
P.O. Box 5770
Harlan, IA 51593-1270
1-866-941-8368
For Subscription Problems Only!
nintendopower@cdsfulfillment.com.
http://service.futureus-inc.com/
REPRINTS: For reprints, contact Reprint Management Services, 717.399.1900 ext. 100

Game trademarks and copyrights are property of their respective owners. TM, ®, the Nintendo DS logo and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2008 Nintendo.

ISSN: 1041-9551

NINJA TOWN™
NOMINEE
BEST OF E3 2008
1UP NETWORK
WWW.1UP.COM
ign.com
BEST OF E3
2008
WINNER
161
20
Hickory Lunge
Ol' Master Ninja leaps on scene causing massive damage to the attackers of Ninjatown.
Wave 10/16
Level 1
shawnimals™
VENAN
SOUTHPEAK GAMES
NINTENDO DS™
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

IGN'S BEST OF E3 AWARD

"BEST ARTISTIC DESIGN - DS GAME"

1UP'S AWARD FOR BEST OF E3 2008

"BEST DS GAME, RUNNER UP"

"Extremely fun…I really didn't want to put the DS down."
– DESTRUCTOID

"A genuinely fun and addictive experience."
– GAME INFORMER

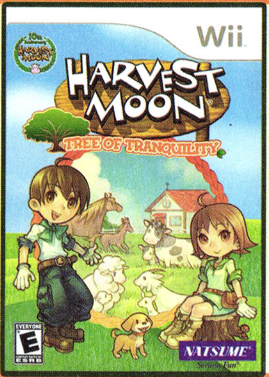
HELP DEFEND NINJATOWN!
AVAILABLE NOW!

Created by a Former EGM Editor and the Producer of GTA3

www.ninjatown.com

Mild Cartoon Violence
Crude Humor

NINTENDO DS IS A TRADEMARK OF NINTENDO. COPYRIGHT © 2008 SOUTHPEAK INTERACTIVE CORPORATION. "SOUTHPEAK", "SOUTHPEAK INTERACTIVE", "SOUTHPEAK GAMES" AND THEIR RELATED LOGOS ARE TRADEMARKS OR REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF SOUTHPEAK INTERACTIVE CORPORATION. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. NINJATOWN CHARACTERS AND ELEMENTS ARE TRADEMARKS OF SHAWNIMALS LLC © 2008.


Wii
10th Anniversary Harvest Moon
HARVEST MOON
TREE OF TRANQUILITY
EVERYONE
E
NATSUME
Serious Fun

Sow your seeds of destiny in this first farming adventure for the Nintendo Wii!

EVERYONE
E
Alcohol Reference
Comic Mischief
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

10th Anniversary
HARVEST MOON

Build your own paradise as you start a new life for yourself!

EVERYONE
E
Comic Mischief
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection
10th Anniversary Harvest Moon
HARVEST MOON
DS
Island of Happiness
NINTENDO DS
EVERYONE
E
Online Interactions Not Rated by the ESRB
NATSUME
Serious Fun

Princess Debut
NINTENDO DS
EVERYONE
E
NATSUME
Serious Fun

Step into the shoes of a princess of a magical kingdom!

EVERYONE
E
Visit www.esrb.org for more ratings information.
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

NATSUME®
Serious Fun®
www.natsume.com

nintendo Wi-Fi connection
NINTENDO DS™
Wii™

©2008 Natsume Inc. Natsume, Serious Fun, Harvest Moon and Princess Debut are trademarks or registered trademarks of Natsume Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries. ©2008 Marvelous Entertainment Inc. All Rights Reserved. ©2006 Nintendo. Nintendo DS, Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

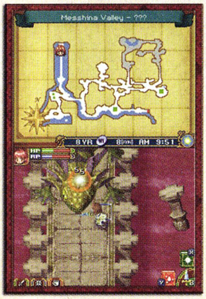
Rune Factory 2

A Fantasy Harvest Moon

An Adventure Spanning Generations!

You don't remember how you arrived in Alvarna or where you came from, but you like living here. It's the sort of place where you could build a farm, raise a family and begin new memories, but there's something unsettling about the recent earthquakes. Is an unseen evil taking root in this beautiful and magical land?

- Hundreds of side quests to complete!
- Befriend monsters to help on your farm!
- Find your true love and raise a family!
- Exciting gameplay modes via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection!


Messhina Valley - ???
8 YR 8 AM 9:51
HP
RP

Sharper Edge Blacksmith 1F
1 YR 2 PM 3:26

Kyle

Yeah, I'm new here. My name is Kyle. I'll be living in the farm just outside of town.

Farm - In Front of House
1 YR 2 AM11:28
HP
RP

Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection
NINTENDO DS
Rune Factory 2
A Fantasy Harvest Moon
EVERYONE
E
NATSUME
Serious Fun

EVERYONE
E
Mild Fantasy Violence
Mild Suggestive Themes
Use of Alcohol
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

NINTENDO DS

nintendo Wi-Fi connection

www.natsume.com

NATSUME®
Serious Fun®

©2008 Natsume Inc. Natsume, Serious Fun and Harvest Moon are registered trademarks of Natsume Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries. ©2008 Marvelous Entertainment Inc. All Rights Reserved. ©2006 Nintendo. Nintendo DS is a trademark of Nintendo. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

ABOUT TIME

マリオさ〜ん
助けてください〜
RPG = RAD PLUMBERS GAME

BOOK LEARNIN'

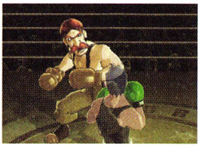
Welcome Back, Mac!

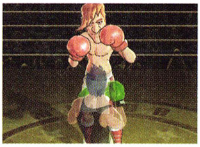
Hold onto your shorts! After more than a decade down on the mat, Punch-Out!! is back up for the next round on Wii.

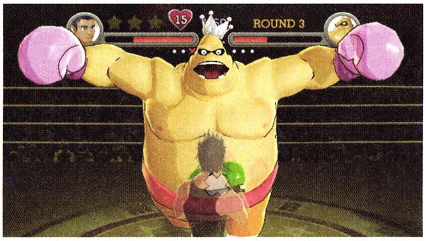
Fourteen years since Little Mac's last title run on the Super NES, Nintendo's classic boxing series is about to make a big comeback on Wii. The new installment—simply titled Punch-Out!!—will debut in the first half of 2009 thanks to developer Next Level Games (Mario Strikers).

Details are scarce, but a few bits of info can be found in the game's teaser trailer and this article's accompanying screens. Alongside Little Mac, mainstays such as King Hippo, Glass Joe, and Von Kaiser will also return. And while beautifully lit 3-D graphics have replaced the 2-D look of the old games, the trailer shows gameplay that is true to the series' roots, with the familiar left/right, high/low punches, a powered-up uppercut, blocking, and dodging all on display. Little Mac is also shown demonstrating the core strategy to the series' arcade-style of boxing: finding openings for counterattacks in each opponent's unique fight pattern. Motion controls have been confirmed, but unlike the sluggish onscreen movements in Wii Sports Boxing, the Punch-Out!! video shows Little Mac throwing quick and crisp high-low combos.

The trailer's classic Punch-Out!! tunes and sounds have our nostalgia meters maxed out. Expect much more coverage as soon as we can dig it up. **—CHRIS SL.**



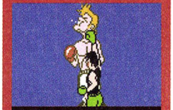


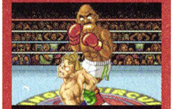


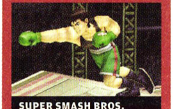
[Above] In the teaser trailer, King Hippo's pants drop whenever he's punched in the belly, just like old times.

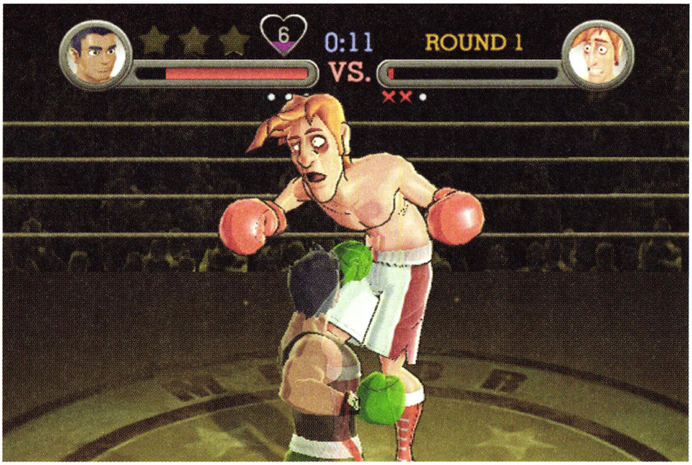
MAC ATTACK

Little Mac has returned to his original look (also seen in Super Smash Bros. Brawl), ditching his Super NES makeover.


PUNCH-OUT!! (NES)


SUPER PUNCH-OUT!! (SNES)


SUPER SMASH BROS. BRAWL (Wii)



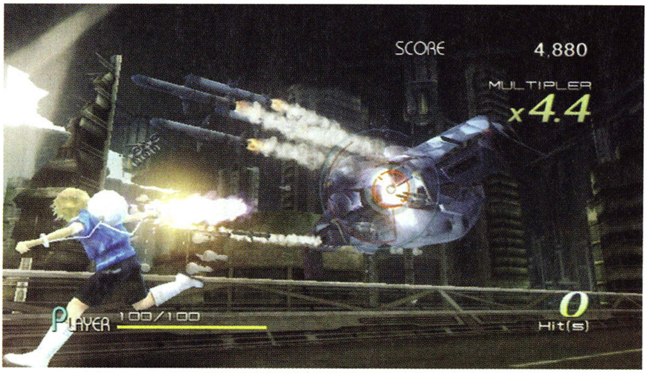
Second Deadly Sin

We called it! Sorta! The sequel to cult hit **Sin and Punishment** will be hitting Wii in 2009.

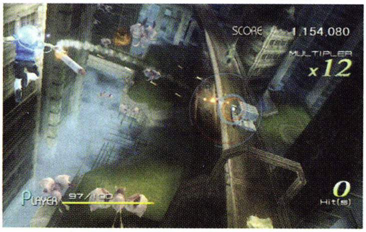
When we interviewed Treasure's Masato Maegawa in Volume 222, he mentioned, "when we were originally working on Sin and Punishment [for Virtual Console], there was some discussion about utilizing Wii-like controls, and I think now that we're working more with Wii, [a sequel] is something we'd very much like to try." Fortunately we forgot about all that, and could therefore fully appreciate the giddy shock and excitement of Sin and Punishment 2's surprise reveal at Nintendo's recent media summit.

The original Sin and Punishment would have been one of the best Nintendo 64 games ever released, had it ever actually been released. But the title slipped through the cracks in North America, and didn't emerge until it was released on Wii's Virtual Console last October. Apparently you all downloaded it like champions, and now we're getting that sequel.

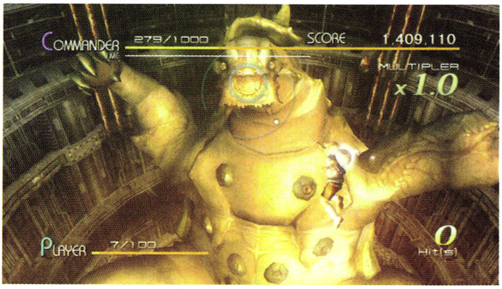
Little information has been revealed about Sin and Punishment 2, but its brief teaser trailer showcases plenty of the same cinematic, fast-paced action that the original third-person shooter is known for. Targeting is done by pointing the Wii remote, and sword-swinging combat will also return. My trigger finger is itching already. **—CASEY L.**



Expect lots of crazy, over-the-top, screen-filled-with-missiles action.



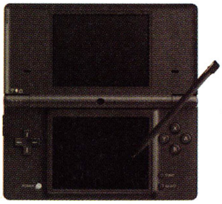
The existence of this game proves that there is a higher power and that he/she/it listens to our prayers.



Portable Power-Up

Nintendo's world-conquering handheld evolves with a host of all-new features. Say hello to the DSi.

Rumors of a new DS model finally came to fruition when Nintendo unveiled the DSi. Due out in Japan by the time you read this and in North America sometime in 2009, the latest version of the dual-screened handheld includes a number of significant upgrades. For starters, an unspecified amount of built-in flash memory will allow users to download games and demos from the upcoming Nintendo DSi shop. (Among the first games available for the service will be redesigned versions of the Brain Age titles.) The unit also houses two .3-megapixel cameras—one on the outside shell and another situated between the screens. It offers music functionality, as well, with songs stored on an SD card (in the AAC format), and built-in software that allows you to control playback speed, pitch, audio filters, and more. Also built in is a new Opera Web browser. Both of the unit's screens are slightly bigger, but a slimmer form factor means the Game Boy Advance slot has been removed. A suggested retail price for the DSi has yet to be announced. **—STEVE T.**



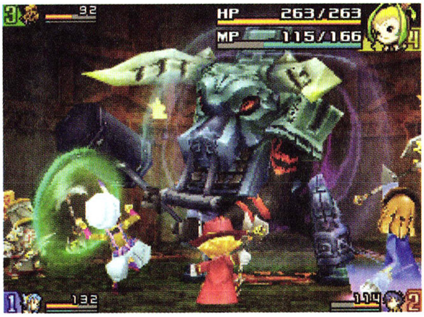
NEWS FROM JAPAN

Crisscrossing Crystal Chronicles

The newest **Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles** is a Wii game and a DS game all at once.

Thanks to Square Enix's new cross-platform Pollux Engine, the latest chapter in the Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles series can be played on whichever Nintendo platform you want. Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Echoes of Time allows players to team up and form four-character parties with friends over Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, even if some of the players have the Wii version while others are playing on the Nintendo DS.

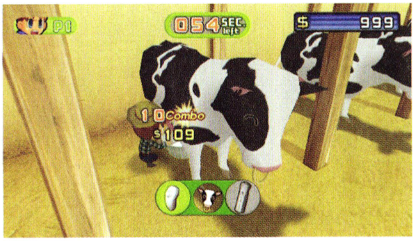
The two versions of the game look basically identical, with the Wii version splitting the game's two screens horizontally across your TV. Whereas DS players will use a stylus to select menu options and preset lines of dialogue from the touch screen, Wii players will use the remote pointer to make selections on the right half of their screen. Not much else has been revealed about the game, but the action-RPG gameplay seems reminiscent of the recent Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fates on DS.

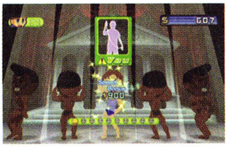


At the moment, Echoes of Time is scheduled for release only in Japan. But the game debuted with the claim that players would be able to use Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection to join up with friends "all over the world." It would take a timely North American release to keep that promise.... **—CASEY L.**

Brotherly Love

As if Punch-Out!!, the DSi, and Sin and Punishment 2 weren't enough to get us frothing, Nintendo also announced **Mario & Luigi RPG 3** (working title) at their recent media summit. Details remain scarce on this DS adventure from the makers of Superstar Saga and Partners in Time, but we know that Bowser will be joining the brothers as a playable character.





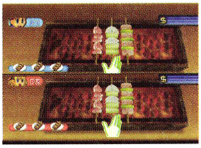
[Left] Heifermania is runnin' wild in Help Wanted, brother! Just be careful how you yank that udder; Bessie will run off if your timing is poor.

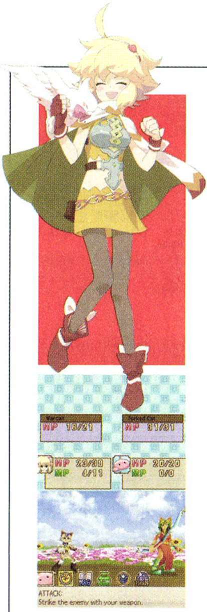
Get a Job!

In **Help Wanted** for Wii you'll earn cash by performing 50 odd jobs—or the Earth will be destroyed. No pressure or anything.

Some games let you be a cook. Others let you be a surgeon or a lawyer. Hudson's Help Wanted (set for release in summer 2009) takes things a step further by letting you try your hand at 50 different vocations—all adapted into fast, fun minigames that utilize the Wii controls in a myriad of ways. As a tailor, for example, you'll hold the Wii remote sideways and guide your stitches as if you were playing a racing game, while as a bodybuilder you'll pose by making gestures to match the onscreen indicators, and as a dairy farmer you'll move the remote and nunchuk up and down to yank your cow's udder. And that's just for starters—you can also step into the shoes of a sumo referee, a fisherman, an astronaut, a dentist, a babysitter, a pit-crew member, and even a game creator, among others. It's all part of your mission to earn oodles of money so you can save the planet from an impending meteorite collision. It's a rough job, but someone's got to do it. **—CHRIS H.**

$ 1110
044 SEC. left
$ 1010





Care for Some Whine?

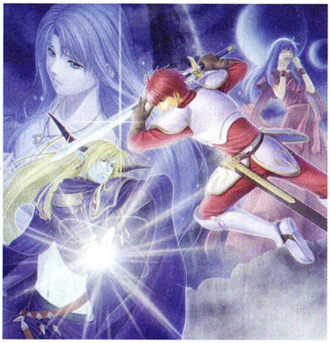
Think being spoiled and selfish is a bad thing? You'll put those "abilities" to good use in **My World, My Way** for DS.

Princess Elise has a problem. You see, she wants something, she wants it now, and she's *just not getting it*. Specifically, she's been turned down by a handsome adventurer—her ideal boyfriend—and so the self-centered 15-year-old sets out on a quest to prove herself (and get everything her heart desires) in My World, My Way, the latest quirky DS role-playing game from Atlus. For the most part, My World, My Way plays like a traditional RPG (complete with turn-based battles), but with one major exception. By developing her selfishness and using Pout Points, Elise can bend the world to her whims—you can alter the game's environments (changing a field to a forest, for example), lower the strength of enemies, skip quests you deem boring, and more. By exerting your will and teaming up with a unique slime that can mimic enemy abilities, you'll help people in need, slay savage beasts, and presumably win your beau's affections. Look for the game in February 2009—because the princess says so, darn it!

—CHRIS H.

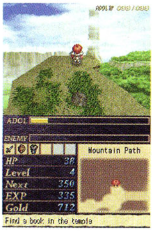
Reunited, and Ys Feels So Good

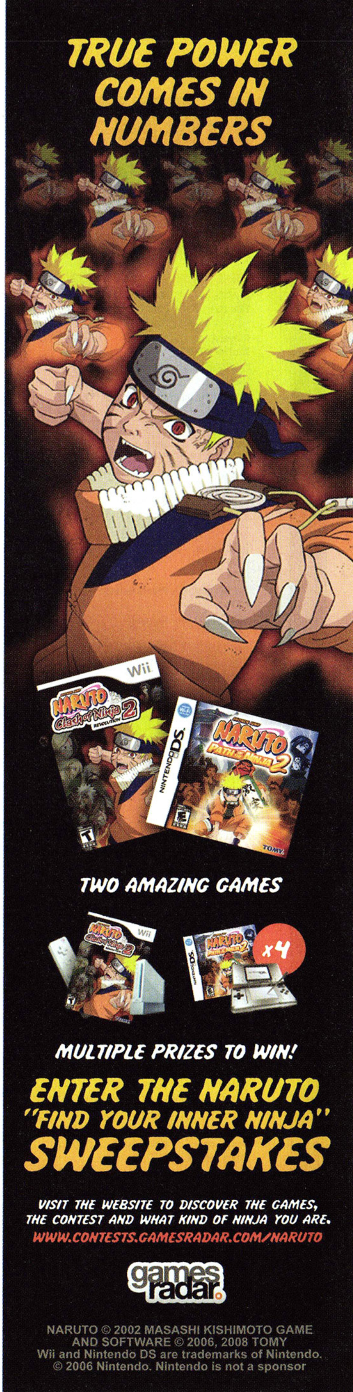
The newly combined DS remakes of **Ys Book I & II** need your touch (screen).



Not to be outdone by the Ys Book I & II collection currently available on Virtual Console, Atlus is taking the two separate Japanese DS remakes of Ys and Ys II and cramming them into a single card. The collection is titled Legacy of Ys: Books I & II, and is scheduled for release on February 10th.

Both titles were originally released over 20 years ago, so the developers have had to take great pains to remake Ys in a way that would appeal to a new generation of fans. That includes rerendering all the series' classic locales in 3-D and adding a new gameplay mode that allows players to swing their blades with the press of a button instead of simply ramming into foes (which is still an option for players who choose to play with the stylus). Old-school fans should appreciate the remixed tunes and the new area, enemies, and boss that have been added to the game's opening chapter. **—CASEY L.**




TRUE POWER COMES IN NUMBERS

TWO AMAZING GAMES

MULTIPLE PRIZES TO WIN!

ENTER THE NARUTO "FIND YOUR INNER NINJA" SWEEPSTAKES

VISIT THE WEBSITE TO DISCOVER THE GAMES, THE CONTEST AND WHAT KIND OF NINJA YOU ARE.
WWW.CONTESTS.GAMESRADAR.COM/NARUTO

gamesradar

NARUTO © 2002 MASASHI KISHIMOTO GAME AND SOFTWARE © 2006, 2008 TOMY
Wii and Nintendo DS are trademarks of Nintendo.
© 2006 Nintendo. Nintendo is not a sponsor

GAME WATCH FORECAST

Wii

Arc Rise Fantasia	Marvelous Entertainment USA/XSEED	SUM 09
Brave: A Warrior's Tale	SouthPeak	2/09
Cake Mania: In the Mix!	Majesco	FALL 09
Catch of the Day	Electronic Arts	TBA
Chrysler Classic Racing	Zoo Games	12/08
The Conduit	Sega	Q1 09
Coraline	D3Publisher	1/09
Cursed Mountain	Deep Silver	2009
Dance Dance Revolution: Disney Grooves	Konami	2009
Dead Rising: Chop Till You Drop	Capcom	Q1 09
The Destiny of Zorro	Pronto Games	TBA
Disaster: Day of Crisis	Nintendo	TBA
Don King Presents: Prizefighter	Take-Two Interactive	3/09
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Crystal Bearers	Square Enix	TBA
Fishing Master: World Tour	Hudson	2009
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	TBA	2009
Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince	Electronic Arts	7/09
Help Wanted	Hudson	SUM 09
The House of the Dead: Overkill	Sega	2009
Indoor Sports	Konami	TBA
Little King's Story	XSEED	12/08
M&M's Beach Party	Zoo Games	12/08
MadWorld	Sega	2009
Major Minor's Majestic March	Majesco	2009
Marble Saga: Kororinpa	Hudson	SPR 09
Muramasa: The Demon Blade	XSEED	2009
No More Heroes: Desperate Struggle	TBA	2010
Onechanbara: Bikini Zombie Slayers	D3Publisher	Q1 09
Overlord Dark Legend	Codemasters	2009
Pirateology	Codemasters	TBA
Pirates vs. Ninjas Dodgeball	Gamecock	1/09
Pro Evolution Soccer 2009	Konami	2009
Professor Heinz Wolff's Gravity	Deep Silver	2/09
Punch-Out!!	Nintendo	1st Half 09
Puzzle Kingdoms	Zoo Games	Q1 09
Pyroblazer	TBA	TBA
Real Heroes: Firefighter	Conspiracy	Q2 09
Rock Band 2	MTV Games	12/08
Roogoo Twisted Towers	SouthPeak	Q1 09
Runaway: The Dream of the Turtle	Focus Home Interactive	TBA
Rune Factory Frontier	Marvelous Interactive	2009
Samurai Shodown Anthology	SNK Playmore	Q4 08
Secret Files: Tunguska	Deep Silver	1/09
Sim Animals	Electronic Arts	2009
Sin and Punishment 2	Nintendo	2009
Skate City Heroes	Zoo Games	Q1 09
Skate It	Electronic Arts	12/08
Sonic and the Black Knight	Sega	2009
Spyborgs	Capcom	2009
Story Hour Adventures	Zoo Games	2008
Story Hour Fairy Tales	Zoo Games	2008
Tenchu 4: Art of the Ninja	Ubisoft	Q1 09
Trivial Pursuit	Electronic Arts	Q2 09
We Ski and Snowboard*	Namco Bandai	3/09
Wii Sports Resort	Nintendo	SPR 09
Wizardology	Codemasters	12/08

NINTENDO DS

Again: Eye of Providence	Tecmo	SPR 09
Avalon Code	Marvelous Interactive	Q1 09
Big Bang Mini	SouthPeak	Q1 09
Blood Bowl	Focus Home Interactive	2008
Blue Dragon Plus	Ignition	2/09
Broken Sword	Ubisoft	2/09
Catch of the Day	Electronic Arts	TBA
Coraline	D3Publisher	1/09
Chrysler Classic Racing	Zoo Games	12/08
de Blob	THQ	3/09
Disciples II	Strategy First	TBA
Don King Presents: Prizefighter	Take-Two Interactive	TBA
Doodle Hex	TBA	TBA
Dragon Quest V: Hand of the Heavenly Bride	Square Enix	TBA
Dragon Quest VI: Realms of Reverie	Square Enix	TBA
Dragonology	Codemasters	12/08
Duke Nukem Trilogy: Chain Reaction	Deep Silver	2009
Duke Nukem Trilogy: Critical Mass	Deep Silver	10/09
Duke Nukem Trilogy: Proving Grounds	Deep Silver	2009
Elebits: The Adventures of Kai and Zero	Konami	Q1 09
Fire Emblem: Shadow Dragon	Nintendo	1st Half 09
Flower, Sun, and Rain	Marvelous Entertainment USA/XSEED	3/09
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	TBA	2009
Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars	Rockstar	WIN 08
The Hardy Boys: Treasure on the Tracks	Sega	SPR 09
Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince	Electronic Arts	7/09
Henry Hatsworth in the Puzzling Adventure	Electronic Arts	2009
Hot 'n' Cold	Majesco	Q1 09
The Humans	Deep Silver	4/09
Infinite Space	Sega	2009
Last King of Africa	Focus Home Interactive	TBA
Left Brain Right Brain 2	Majesco	12/08
Legacy of Ys: Books I & II	Atlus	2/09
Little Magician's Magic Adventure	Konami	Q1 09
Lux-Pain	Ignition	3/09
Mario & Luigi 3*	Nintendo	2009
Monsters Racers	Koei	2009
My World, My Way	Atlus	2/09
Mystery P.I.: Portrait of a Thief	PopCap	12/08
Overlord Minions	Codemasters	2009
Peggle: Dual Shot	PopCap	3/09
Personal Trainer: Walking	Nintendo	2009
Pet Vet Down Under	Deep Silver	TBA
Pirate Battle	Orbital Media	TBA
Pirateology	Codemasters	TBA
Professor Heinz Wolff's Gravity	Deep Silver	2/09
Puzzle Kingdoms	Zoo Games	Q1 09
Puzzle Quest: Galactrix	D3Publisher	Q1 09
Rhythm Heaven	Nintendo	1st half 09
Roogoo Tower Attack	SouthPeak	Q1 09
Runaway: The Dream of the Turtle	Focus Home Interactive	TBA
Sands of Destruction	Sega	FALL 09
Secret Files: Tunguska	Deep Silver	1/09
Sim Animals	Electronic Arts	2009
Skate It	Electronic Arts	12/08
Suikoden: Tierkreis	Konami	12/08
The Tale of Despereaux	Brash	12/08
TrackMania DS	Focus Home Interactive	Q4 08
Warlords DS	Strategy First	TBA
A Witch's Tale	NIS America	Q1 09
Wizardology	Codemasters	12/08

RED TEXT = TITLES ADDED THIS MONTH *TENTATIVE TITLE NOTE: RELEASE DATES OFTEN CHANGE

BITS OF TID

Welcome to the Club

Finally! Club Nintendo comes to North America.

Already a staple of Japanese and European Nintendo fandom, the Club Nintendo program is making its North American debut this holiday season. By registering your games and completing surveys, you'll earn "loyalty coins" that you can redeem for exclusive items.

A New Roll

Marble-maze game Kororinpa returns to Wii.

Hudson has announced that Marble Saga: Kororinpa will be headed to Wii in spring 2009. Expect the same remote-tilting gameplay as the original Kororinpa, but with 150 creative new levels, a stage editor, Wi-Fi connectivity, Balance Board and Mii compatibility, and an all-new story mode.

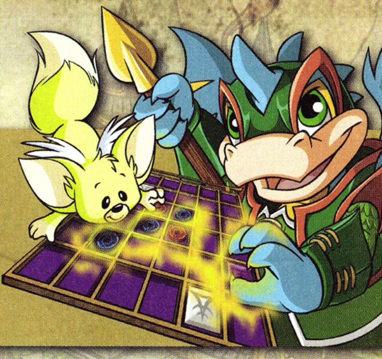
Back to the Big Time

Rumors of E3's death prove greatly exaggerated.

Following industry-wide dissatisfaction with this year's zombified E3 Media & Business Summit, the Entertainment Software Association has announced the return of the old E3, complete with bigger booths, more attendees, and ear-shattering spectacle. The Los Angeles Convention Center will once again play host to the madness, which is set to take place June 2-4, 2009.

neopets

PUZZLE ADVENTURE



Bonkerjerks
Gikerot
0161
0215
25
25
25
0

VIRTUAL PRIZE **Unlock** virtual prizes on **Neopets.com**

- **Create** and **customize** your own Neopet!
- **Play** together with friends!
- **Explore** Neopia and **Solve** countless puzzles
- **From** the creators of **Puzzle Quest**

Kacheek
Choose a Species
Next Species
Previous Species
Strength
Movement
Defence
Kacheeks
Continue
Back

Wii
neopets
PUZZLE ADVENTURE
PC CD
CAPCOM
NINTENDO DS

Experience the World of Neopia Like Never Before!

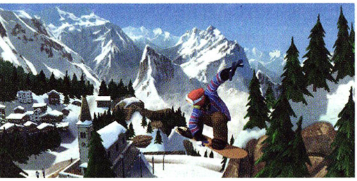
NICKELODEON THE WAY NVIDIA IT'S MEANT TO BE PLAYED PC CD-ROM SOFTWARE Wii NINTENDO DS

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB Visit www.esrb.org for rating information

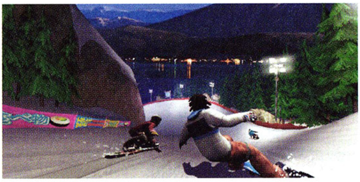
CAPCOM

©CAPCOM ENTERTAINMENT, INC. 2008 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. © 2008 NeoPets, Inc. NeoPets is a MTV Networks company. Used under license. Wii and Nintendo DS are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo. All other trademarks are owned by their respective owners.

shaunwhitegame.com



Ride different locations around the world



Up to 4 players simultaneously

Developed specifically for Wii Balance Board™ accessory and Wii Remote™*

PRODUCTS RANGE FROM EVERYONE TO EVERYONE 10+
E-E 10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Wii

NINTENDO DS™

*Game works with only one balance board at a time. Wii Balance Board is not necessary to play the game and is available separately.

Wii
Shaun White Snowboarding
Road Trip
NINTENDO DS
Shaun White SNOWBOARDING

Grab your friends for the ultimate road trip.

See you on the mountain.

In Stores Now.

Shaun White Snowboarding

UBISOFT

© 2008 Ubisoft Entertainment. All Rights Reserved. Ubisoft, Ubi.com, and the Ubisoft logo are trademarks of Ubisoft Entertainment in the U.S. and/or other countries. Shaun White is used under license from Shaun White and Shaun White Enterprises, Inc. Wii and Nintendo DS are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo.

Wii Channels

Retro chic is the in thing on WiiWare—check out the upcoming Cave Story and Gradius ReBirth as proof. Also: Racing and pool have never looked so promising.

In This Section

WiiWARE INTERVIEW
Cave Story

WiiWARE INTERVIEW
Gradius ReBirth

WiiWARE PREVIEW
Pool Revolution: Cue Sports

WiiWARE PREVIEW
High Voltage Hot Rod Show

RESULTS
Virtual Console Super NES Poll

8
WiiWARE REVIEWS

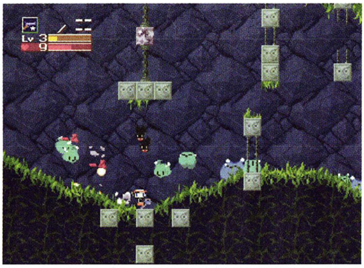
- ART STYLE: CUBELLO
- ART STYLE: ORBIENT
- BOMBERMAN BLAST
- THE INCREDIBLE MAZE
- MADSTONE
- MIDNIGHT BOWLING
- TETRIS PARTY
- WORLD OF GOO

7
VIRTUAL CONSOLE REVIEWS

- DIGITAL CHAMP BATTLE BOXING
- GRADIUS II: GOFER NO YABOU
- MARIO GOLF
- SECRET OF MANA
- SHINING FORCE II
- STREET FIGHTER II: SPECIAL CHAMPION EDITION
- SUPER TURRICAN 2

Modern Classic

WiiWare adventure game **Cave Story** puts a new spin on an old-school gaming formula.



Take one look at Nicalis's upcoming WiiWare game Cave Story and you might think it's a lost classic from the 8-bit era. After all, it's got hand-drawn 2-D graphics, Metroid-style nonlinear game design, and weapons, abilities, and enemies comparable to the best that retro gaming has to offer. In fact, however, the game originated on PC merely four years ago, where its NES-style take on the action-adventure-platforming genre and its intriguing story (about a boy with no memory saving the rabbitlike Mimiga people from an evil doctor) earned it a dedicated cult following. The WiiWare version of the game retains everything that made the original version a hit, but upgrades it with higher-resolution character sprites, enhanced music, and more. We recently had the chance to speak to the game's creator, Daisuke "Pixel" Amaya (who created the PC game nearly single-handedly), to find out what Cave Story is all about. —CHRIS H.

NINTENDO POWER What made you decide to create the original Cave Story in the first place?

PIXEL I made Cave Story because I was confident that I could make something fun. Before attempting to do it, I had really wanted to make the game for a long time; I enjoy drawing and making music, but making video games is what I'm most passionate about.

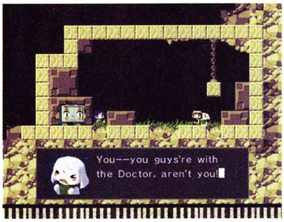
What were the inspirations for the game?

Many of the games and various elements of those games that I've played up until now served as reference material for Cave Story.

What are some of your favorite classic NES games?

There are a few older Famicom [Japanese NES] games, but I really enjoyed Super Mario Bros., Dragon Quest II, Metroid, Chubby Cherub, Star Soldier, and Gradius. I can't remember all the games I played, so I'm sure there are a lot more.

The graphics and music of that era are very memorable and priceless to me. Looking back now, it was a really carefree time—at the time, I didn't have to worry about the future. All I had to worry about was playing games on my Famicom.



You—you guys're with the Doctor, aren't you!

Forget about the doctor—that's a walking suitcase with eyeballs! Run for your life!

What about the game makes it ideal for WiiWare?

Digital downloading seems to be at a point where enough people notice and purchase music, movies, and games. With WiiWare we're able to price Cave Story at what we think is a fair price given that the WiiWare version has new upgrades. That way new and old players can enjoy the game. And growing up with Nintendo, it really is like a dream to be able to put Cave Story on the console, regardless if it's WiiWare or disc.

What is your philosophy behind the upgraded graphics and music?

We wanted to give [the Wii version] something that the existing version didn't have. The original game was designed with a lower resolution in mind, so it was very easy to decide on redoing the graphics and sound. But we really wanted to keep the art consistent with the original game, so we did. If players want to play the game with original graphics and audio they can, too.

Are there any other changes or additions being made to the game?

We haven't revealed them just yet, as we want to surprise players with the new additions.

What would you like to accomplish with the WiiWare version of Cave Story?

I really want players to enjoy the game. Bringing it to the Wii means that more people can play the game and discover it. I appreciate all the support of fans up until now and I hope that they look forward to playing Cave Story again on WiiWare.

Born-Again Shooter

Save the galaxy once again in the latest installment of Konami's legendary shooter franchise, the WiiWare-exclusive **Gradius ReBirth**.

"Shoot the core!" If those words mean anything to you, then you're probably already waiting with trigger finger at the ready to launch into space and battle the Bacterion Empire in Gradius ReBirth. Staying true to its classic roots, Gradius ReBirth borrows elements from past Gradius games and recombines them into a new but familiar 16-bit-style side-scrolling shooter experience, complete with creative levels, multiple weapon sets, treacherous bosses, and wave after wave of pattern-based foes. We checked in with director Toshiyasu Kamiko to learn more about this WiiWare update to one of the most revered names in its genre. **—CHRIS H.**

NINTENDO POWER What was the design philosophy of Gradius ReBirth?

TOSHIYASU KAMIKO When we started preproduction we wanted to see if there was any way we could make this game so that people could play Gradius casually. As with other Gradius games, we wanted to have the best graphics and sound, but as production started this time we thought, "This style might work too." So it is kind of like a test case.

What about Gradius ReBirth makes it ideal for WiiWare?

This was the first time I developed a title for WiiWare, so I was a bit worried because at the time there weren't many WiiWare games for hardcore players. However, this provided an opportunity to fill that void and I am happy that I can bring this game to Gradius fans conveniently through WiiWare.

How did you decide what kinds of levels and bosses to include in the game?

We got inspiration from the Game Boy versions of Gradius as well as the NES and MSX [Japanese PC] Gradius games. I was using the Game Boy version as a reference at the beginning of the production, but it has changed a lot since then.

As usual with Gradius, the game is pretty tough. What advice do you have for newcomers to the series?

We were aiming for older Gradius-style gameplay, so it will be a bit tough. Basically the best strategy for the game is to memorize the locations of the enemies and their attack patterns.

For people who have not played a Gradius game before I would strongly suggest starting with the easiest difficulty level due to the learning curve required for the game.

I would recommend weapon set A, which is the same as in the original [Gradius], due to the overall balance of the weapons. However, you cannot shoot backwards with this weapon set, so you will need to be very careful.

What is your history with the Gradius series?

I was in charge of implementing the game in the recent PSP and DS releases. I also worked on the version of the game that you can play on the built-in entertainment systems on airlines.

As a player, I've enjoyed playing the game since the original arcade version (and the MSX version).

What do you think makes the Gradius series stand out from other shooters?

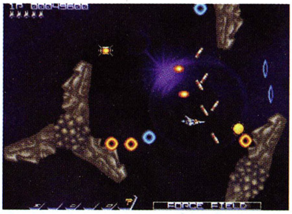
It is the unique world view, the high-quality sound, the [emphasis on] strategic attacks with the power-up system... there are so many points that make this series stand out from other shooters.

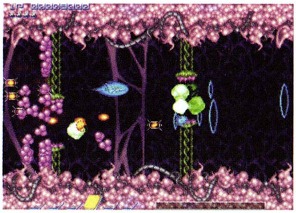
Other than Gradius ReBirth, what do you think the best game is in the Gradius series?

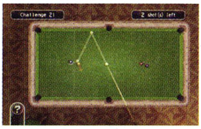
The best game would be, of course, the original arcade version. It is hard to say how it influenced me, but it is definitely the exemplary Gradius game in every way.

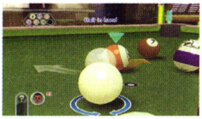
Are there any secrets or surprises that hardcore players can look forward to?

Every key element that should be in a Gradius game is in there. Also, fans of previous Gradius games should be able to recognize the music. If you can tell where all the music comes from, you must be a serious Gradius fan!





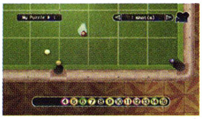




Right on Cue

Anyone can be a billiards master with **Pool Revolution: Cue Sports** for WiiWare.

Hudson's Pool Revolution: Cue Sports won't be the first billiards title available on WiiWare, but it might be the most accessible and feature-filled. Four traditional pool games—eight ball, nine ball, rotation, and snooker—are on tap for you to test your skills, and you'll never be wanting for competition; if CPU foes and local opponents (the game supports up to four players) aren't up to the task, you can hop on Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection to prove that you're the best. On the other hand, if you don't know the first thing about pool, you'll still be able to have a good time. A rulebook and practice mode will teach you the intricacies of each game, while optional onscreen indicators will enable you to line up the perfect shot. The title also supports multiple control schemes; you can opt for realistic motion-based controls to simulate the motion of an actual pool cue, or use button-based controls (complete with a manual power gauge) for ultimate precision. Once you've got the hang of the basics, you can tackle the game's 50 trick-shot puzzle levels, and if that's not enough, you can even create your own. **—CHRIS H.**



Zip and Zap

Inspired by Ed "Big Daddy" Roth's way-out racers and powered by High Voltage Software's Quantum 3 graphics engine (also used for buzzed-about FPS The Conduit), High Voltage Hot Rod Show is screaming to the finish line this fall. The WiiWare racer rewards risk-takers with speed boosts; pull off a nifty trick high above the track, and your hot rod will kick it up a notch as soon as your wheels hit dirt. You'll also gain ground by targeting Boost Rings and high-flying Speed Stars, and demonstrate mad skills by power-sliding around corners and bunny-hopping over obstacles. Default controls use the Wii remote-only tilt-to-turn scheme (ready for the Wii Wheel). You can also plug in a nunchuk or Classic controller to initiate Control Stick steering. Up to four players race split-screen around the game's island, desert, ruins, and forest tracks. **—GEORGE S.**

DOWNLOAD STATION

WiiWare

ART STYLE: CUBELLO

PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
Wii POINTS: **600**

By using the Wii remote to fire colored cubes at a rotating cube jumble, you aim to eliminate combinations of four matching pieces. The sound and graphics are stunning and gameplay is solid. One complaint: often, too much time is spent waiting for the assembly to rotate into a usable position. Since more cubes pop up with time, your chances for success don't always seem to be under your control. **—GEORGE S.**

Recommended

WiiWare

ART STYLE: ORBIENT

PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
Wii POINTS: **600**

Art Style: Orbient is a mini masterpiece of a puzzle game. You control a celestial body with only the power to attract other objects or push them away by changing the object's gravitational orientation—two buttons; that's it. The 50 levels are a little low on variety, save for changing background art, planet sizes, and space-junk density, but the difficulty does ramp up gently and the game maintains a polished sci-fi feel. **—GEORGE S.**

Recommended

WiiWare

BOMBERMAN BLAST

PUBLISHER: **HUDSON**
GENRE: **ACTION**
Wii POINTS: **1,000**

With a variety of gameplay modes as well as all of the multiplayer fun you expect from the series, Bomberman Blast is a great way to spend time with friends. Yes, you can play against seven other bots if you're all by your lonesome, but it's not nearly as fun as blasting your buddies. Besides, even if you can't gather your friends around a single TV, you can always play the very solid online multiplayer. **—JUSTIN C.**

Recommended

WiiWare

THE INCREDIBLE MAZE

PUBLISHER: **DIGITAL LEISURE**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
Wii POINTS: **500**

By tilting the Wii remote or shifting your weight on the Balance Board, you're able to guide balls through perilous labyrinths in The Incredible Maze. The controls work as advertised, but man, are they twitchy. Precise control is an exercise in monklike patience. Since you get infinite respawns in the game's standard mode, the frustration isn't as severe as it could be, but it's not what I'd call fun. **—CHRIS H.**

Grumble Grumble

WiiWare

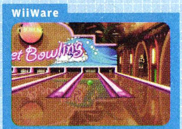
MADSTONE

PUBLISHER: **RIVERMAN MEDIA**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
Wii POINTS: **800**

Your goal in Madstone is to blast blocks out of the way to allow colorful gems to reach the goal at the bottom of the screen. It's a simple concept supported by an equally simple chain/combo system, and the result is low-intensity fun. The aesthetics are nice, but the game would have benefitted from modes beyond versus-CPU and versus-human play. The clever bonus rounds could have been the basis for an entire game. **—CHRIS H.**

Hmmm...

WiiWare



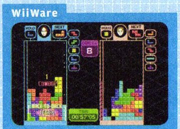
MIDNIGHT BOWLING

PUBLISHER: **GAMELOFT**
GENRE: **SPORTS**
Wii POINTS: **800**

Take a fun, popular, and free game like Wii Sports Bowling, subtract Miis and smooth play mechanics, then add shoddy graphics, shoddy controls, and a price tag. The result is Midnight Bowling, a weak replacement for an already fun experience. Of particular note are the creepy characters you can choose to play as—it's like a lineup of the kinds of people your parents taught you to stay away from at nightclubs. **—HORTENSE M.**

Grumble Grumble

WiiWare



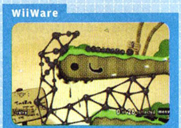
TETRIS PARTY

PUBLISHER: **TETRIS ONLINE**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
Wii POINTS: **1,200**

Tetris Party is probably the best deal in WiiWare. This latest version of the classic block-dropping puzzler does a better job than most of complementing the basic game with a long list of quality single- and multiplayer modes, which include addictive Wi-Fi play complete with leaderboards. Tetris Party is missing the retro charm and portability of Tetris DS—still my top Tetris—but this is the best console version I've ever played. **—CHRIS SL.**

Recommended

WiiWare

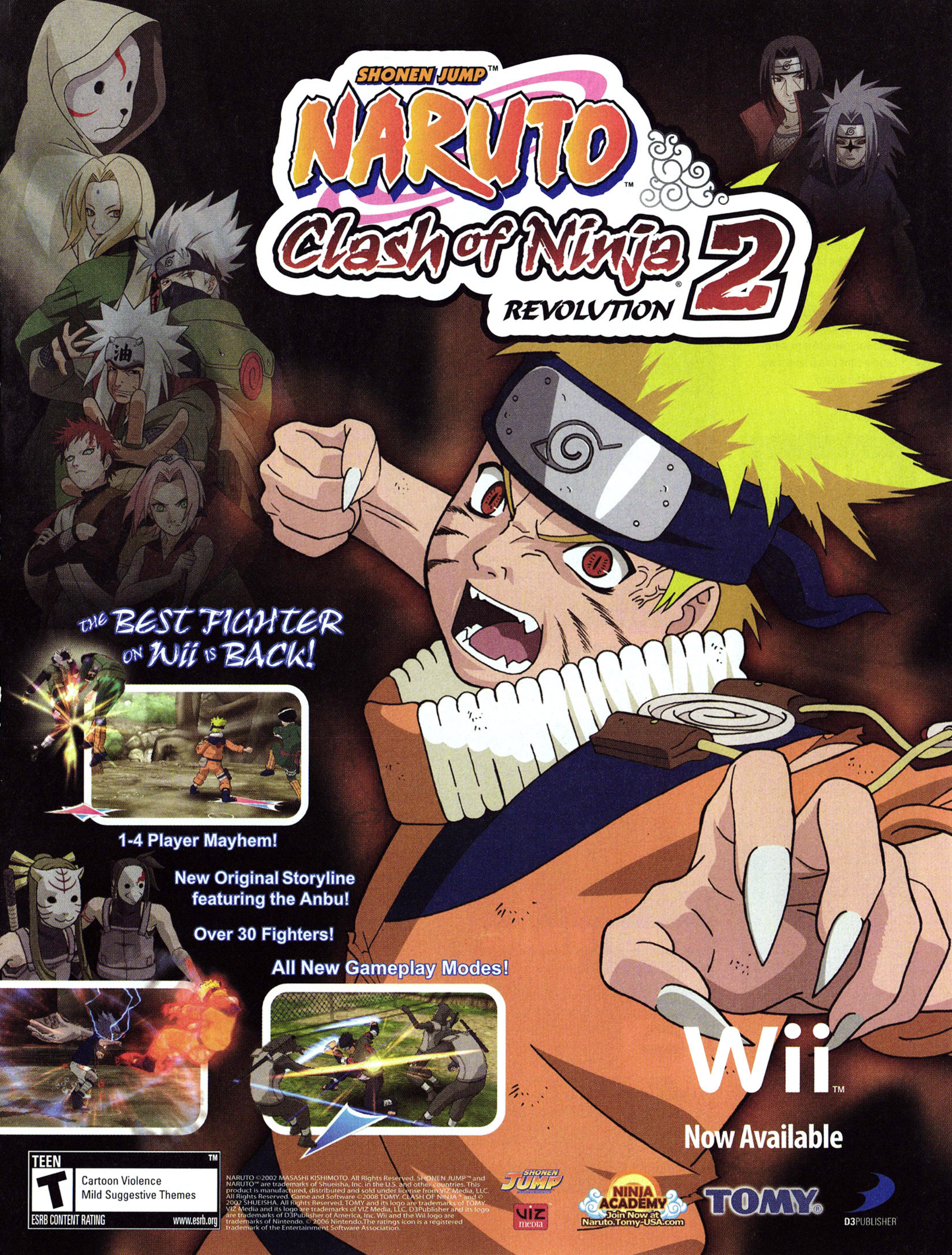


WORLD OF GOO

PUBLISHER: **2D BOY**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
Wii POINTS: **1,500**

World of Goo is all about building things with living balls of, well, goo while trying to get as many goo balls as you can to the goal. It's a pretty simple premise, but it's a lot of fun, mainly thanks to the game's awesome physics. As you build taller or wider structures, you have to support your structure with more goo orbs, with the trade-off being there are fewer blobs to cross the finish line. The cool style is just icing on the cake. **—JUSTIN C.**

Recommended


SHONEN JUMP™
NARUTO™
Clash of Ninja® REVOLUTION 2
THE BEST FIGHTER ON Wii IS BACK!
1-4 Player Mayhem!
New Original Storyline featuring the Anbu!
Over 30 Fighters!
All New Gameplay Modes!
Wii™
Now Available
TEEN T
Cartoon Violence
Mild Suggestive Themes
ESRB CONTENT RATING
www.esrb.org
SHONEN JUMP
VIZ media
NINJA ACADEMY
Join Now at Naruto.Tomy-USA.com
TOMY®
D3PUBLISHER

NARUTO ©2002 MASASHI KISHIMOTO. All Rights Reserved. SHONEN JUMP™ and NARUTO™ are trademarks of Shueisha, Inc. in the U.S. and other countries. This product is manufactured, distributed and sold under license from VIZ Media, LLC. All Rights Reserved. Game and Software ©2008 TOMY. CLASH OF NINJA ® and © 2002 SHUEISHA. All Rights Reserved. TOMY and its logo are trademarks of TOMY VIZ Media and its logo are trademarks of VIZ Media, LLC. D3Publisher and its logo are trademarks of D3Publisher of America, Inc. Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo.The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

Talk is Cheap... er, Free!

Nintendo recently announced that the soon-to-be-released Wii Speak microphone peripheral will include a coupon to download the all-new Wii Speak Channel free of charge. The channel will allow up to four groups of Wii Speak owners to converse with each other simultaneously, and you can use it to send audio clips to a friend's Wii Message Board.

WANTED!

First-party titles dominate the readers' list of most-wanted Super NES Virtual Console games. Earthbound, not surprisingly, takes the top slot.

READERS' MOST WANTED: SUPER NES

1 Earthbound
2 Star Fox
3 Super Mario Kart
4 Yoshi's Island: Super Mario World 2
5 Kirby's Dream Land 3

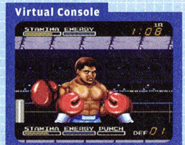
NP STAFF'S MOST WANTED: SUPER NES

1 Terranigma (Europe & Japan)
2 Super Punch-Out!!
3 Super Mario All-Stars
4 Earthbound
5 Final Fantasy VI

Next issue we'll run the most-wanted TurboGrafx16 and Turbo CD games, followed by the top NES titles in Vol. 238. Send your top five choices for **TurboGrafx** and/or **NES** games to **vcpoll@nintendo power.com**. Note: This is for polling purposes only and will in no way determine future Virtual Console releases.

DOWNLOAD STATION

Virtual Console



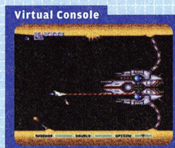
DIGITAL CHAMP BATTLE BOXING

PLATFORM: **TURBOGRAFX16**
PUBLISHER: **NAXAT SOFT**
GENRE: **SPORTS**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1989**

It isn't totally fair to say that Digital Champ is a straight rip-off of the classic boxing title Punch-Out!!, mostly because Digital Champ lacks the memorable characters and artful gameplay of its precursor. The TurboGrafx title does attempt to create a more realistic boxing experience, but bad hit detection and lethargic controls miss the pugilistic point. —**HORTENSE M.**

Grumble Grumble

Virtual Console



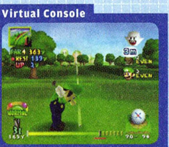
GRADIUS II: GOFER NO YABOU

PLATFORM: **TURBOGRAFX16**
PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
GENRE: **SHOOTER**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1992**

Shooter fans, rejoice—Gradius II has finally received a home-console release in North America! Admittedly, the game's long-overdue arrival isn't quite as exciting as it could be given that many of its innovations have been in subsequent Gradius titles, but Gradius II still provides some top-notch shooting, a hardcore challenge, and awesome boss battles. —**CHRIS H.**

Recommended

Virtual Console



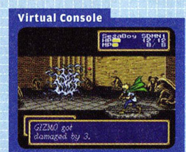
MARIO GOLF

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO 64**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
GENRE: **SPORTS**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1999**

When revisiting this N64 classic, links fans are likely to miss the extra polish that's been added to golf games since Mario Golf's original 1999 release—for instance, the timing of the swing meter isn't nearly as snappy as I've come to expect. However, the genre-defining gameplay by developer Camelot is still solid, with nice modes and lots of unlockable courses and characters. —**CHRIS SL.**

Recommended

Virtual Console



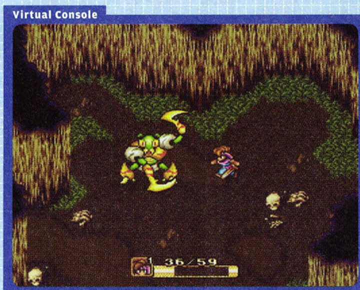
SHINING FORCE II

PLATFORM: **SEGA GENESIS**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
GENRE: **STRATEGY**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1994**

The pinnacle of 16-bit strategy-RPGs, Shining Force II takes everything that made its predecessor great and improves upon it. The quest is larger, the battle graphics shinier, and the cast of playable characters even more expansive. Most importantly, the deep, addictive gameplay will keep you up into the wee hours of the morning. An absolute must-play for armchair generals. —**STEVE T.**

Recommended

Virtual Console



SECRET OF MANA

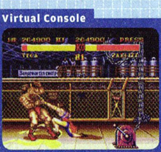
PLATFORM: **SUPER NES** • PUBLISHER: **SQUARE ENIX**
GENRE: **ADVENTURE** • ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1993**

Justin C's Pick

A big reason why Secret of Mana is one of my favorite Super NES games ever (besides its great soundtrack) is the co-op gameplay—three players can run around in this action-RPG, bashing baddies and leveling up both your characters and weapons. Thankfully, it's much easier to play cooperatively on Wii since you don't have to hook up a multitap like you did back in the day.

Recommended

Virtual Console



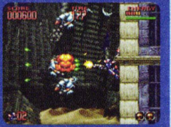
STREET FIGHTER II: SPECIAL CHAMPION EDITION

PLATFORM: **SEGA GENESIS**
PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**
GENRE: **FIGHTING**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1993**

I was a big proponent of Special Champion Edition back in the day, but that was due mostly to the excellent Genesis six-button controller. Take that out of the equation, and there's not much reason to get this over SFII Turbo for SNES. It's still a great fighter, but the colors and sound quality don't measure up. —**STEVE T.**

Hmmm...

Virtual Console

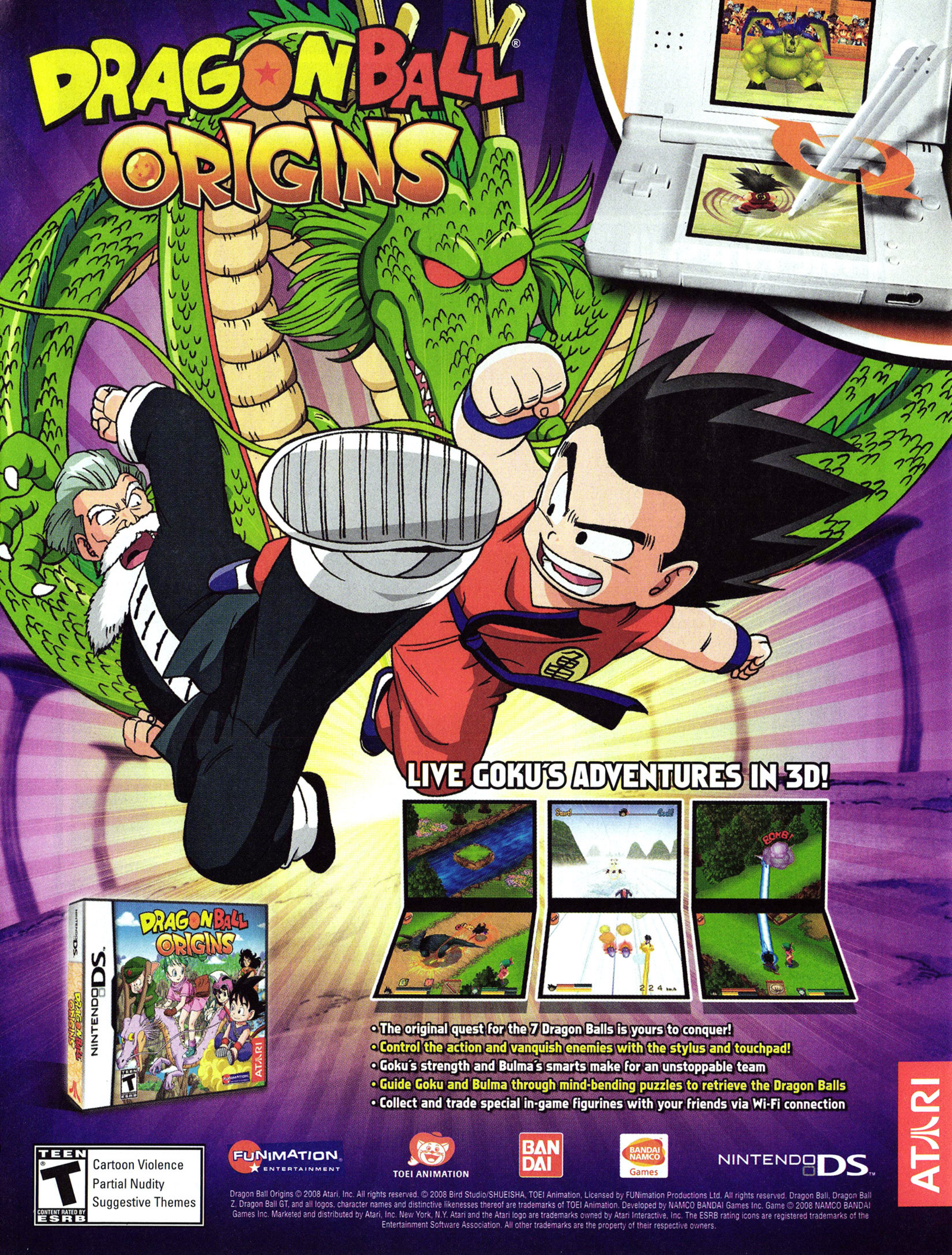


SUPER TURRICAN 2

PLATFORM: **SUPER NES**
PUBLISHER: **FACTOR 5/ OCEAN**
GENRE: **ACTION**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1995**

Though full of high-intensity sci-fi thrills, Super Turrican 2 doesn't do enough to stand out from other side-scrolling action games. Plentiful power-ups, cool Bionic Commando-style grappling techniques, and the inclusion of 3-D shooting stages help, yet it still feels somewhat generic. It's also very tough due to limited continues. —**CHRIS H.**

Hmmm...



DRAGON BALL® ORIGINS

LIVE GOKU'S ADVENTURES IN 3D!

- The original quest for the 7 Dragon Balls is yours to conquer!
- Control the action and vanquish enemies with the stylus and touchpad!
- Goku's strength and Bulma's smarts make for an unstoppable team
- Guide Goku and Bulma through mind-bending puzzles to retrieve the Dragon Balls
- Collect and trade special in-game figurines with your friends via Wi-Fi connection

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Cartoon Violence
Partial Nudity
Suggestive Themes

FUNIMATION ENTERTAINMENT
TOEI ANIMATION
BAN DAI
BANDAI NAMCO Games
NINTENDO DS™
ATARI

Dragon Ball Origins © 2008 Atari, Inc. All rights reserved. © 2008 Bird Studio/SHUEISHA, TOEI Animation, Licensed by FUNimation Productions Ltd. All rights reserved. Dragon Ball, Dragon Ball Z, Dragon Ball GT, and all logos, character names and distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of TOEI Animation. Developed by NAMCO BANDAI Games Inc. Game © 2008 NAMCO BANDAI Games Inc. Marketed and distributed by Atari, Inc. New York, N.Y. Atari and the Atari logo are trademarks owned by Atari Interactive, Inc. The ESRB rating icons are registered trademarks of the Entertainment Software Association. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

THIS MONTH IN PREVIEWS

BLUE DRAGON PLUS PG. 32
DEADLY CREATURES PG. 31
FIRE EMBLEM: SHADOW DRAGON PG. 30
ONECHANBARA: BIKINI ZOMBIE SLAYERS PG. 32
PUZZLE KINGDOMS PG. 34
ROCK BAND 2 PG. 34

The Fire Still Burns

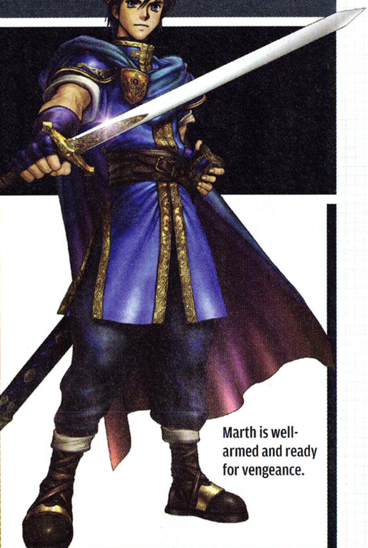
> FIRE EMBLEM: SHADOW DRAGON

PLATFORM: **DS** • PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **INTELLIGENT SYSTEMS**
RELEASE: **1ST HALF 2009**

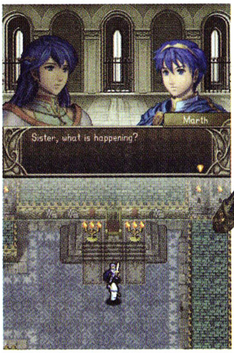
Millions of gamers recognize Marth as the blue-haired swordsman extraordinaire from the Super Smash Bros. games, and most know that the character got his start in Nintendo's hit strategy-RPG series Fire Emblem. But not many North American players have had the chance to see Marth's adventures firsthand, since his story—the very first Fire Emblem for the Famicom (Japanese NES)—was never released outside of Japan. That's going to change, however, when a remake of the game, titled Fire Emblem: Shadow Dragon, comes to DS in the first half of 2009.

Fans of recent Fire Emblem titles will have no trouble easing into Shadow Dragon's familiar gameplay: grid-based battles, numerous unit types, a rock-paper-scissors-style weapon triangle, and permanent character deaths (should any of your heroes fall in battle) are all part of the series' hit formula. Of course, this is more than a simple port of a classic title; the graphics, naturally, have been vastly improved over their original 8-bit designs, and optional touch-screen controls have been implemented to commemorate the series' DS debut. User-friendliness is the name of the game; six difficulty levels make the game accessible to veterans and newcomers alike, while convenient features—such as a map overlay that shows the collective range of all enemy units—help provide an edge in battle. One of the coolest additions is four new prologue chapters, which not only offer tutorials in Fire Emblem basics, but detail the story of how Prince Marth was sent into exile after his kingdom was betrayed.

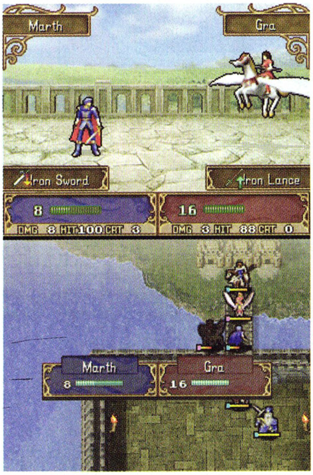
In addition to a lengthy single-player adventure, Shadow Dragon features a head-to-head versus mode over local wireless or Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection (which comes complete with voice chat through the DS mic). Alternatively, if you'd rather cooperate with your friends than fight them, you can lend them your troops to bolster their ranks (or borrow theirs if need be). Got some spare gold? Then check out the game's online shop, which features unique and powerful items. Shadow Dragon is clearly more than a blast from Fire Emblem's past; it's also one of the series' most robust entries yet. —**CHRIS H.**

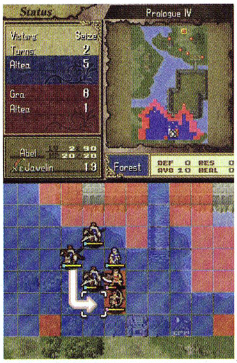


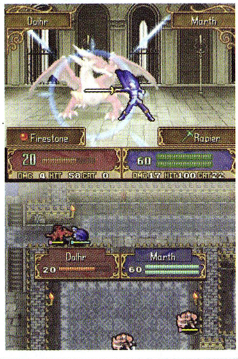
Marth is well-armed and ready for vengeance.

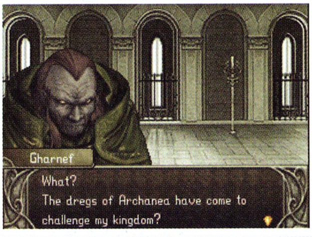


Marth
Sister, what is happening?

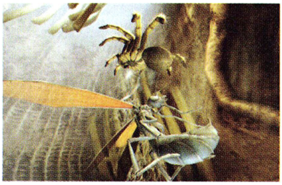


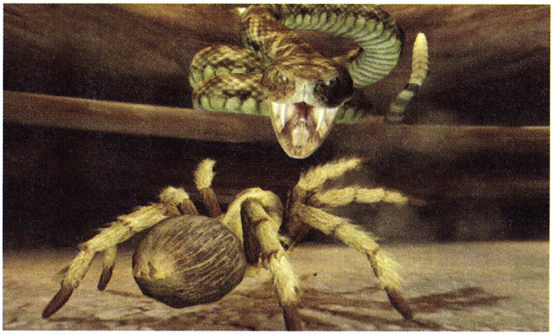






Gharnef
What?
The dregs of Archanea have come to challenge my kingdom?



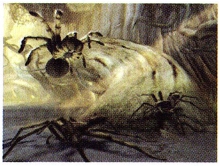


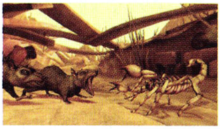
Along Came a Spider...

> DEADLY CREATURES

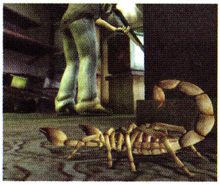
PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **RAINBOW STUDIOS**
RELEASE: **DECEMBER 2008**

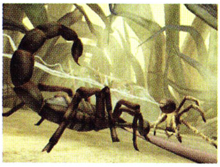
When some people see a tarantula or a scorpion, they scream or flee in terror. In Rainbow Studios's Wii-exclusive action-adventure game Deadly Creatures, the tables are turned; the one controlling such unsavory critters is you. Deadly Creatures has come a long way since we first saw it back in Vol. 227, but its unique premise remains unchanged: playing as the arachnid duo (you control the scorpion and the tarantula on alternating levels), you'll explore a microcosm of the American southwest—full of bramble thickets, claustrophobic underground passageways, and long-forgotten junk heaps—while battling other nasty creatures (such as hornets, beetles, lizards, rats, and various types of spiders) amidst the backdrop of some shady human activities. The scorpion and the tarantula each have unique moves—the tarantula can grapple using its web and perform a stealthy pounce attack, whereas the scorpion can block and burrow into the earth, for example—and both earn new abilities and heightened strength and stamina as you progress through the stages. Complex level architecture, impressive texture work, and a foreboding, moody atmosphere (accentuated by the eerie soundtrack) combine to make a game that's unlike anything else out there. —**CHRIS H.**





Rat vs. scorpion handicap match! You won't see this pay-per-view-quality bout in any other Wii games.





FAMILY PLAYTIME
ULTIMATE PUZZLE GAMES Sudoku Edition
NINTENDO DS
Unlimited puzzles!
9 x 9 Grids
8 x 8 Grids
6 x 6 Grids
4 x 4 Grids
Sudoku Solver
Difficulty Levels
Great 2 Player Modes
SOLITAIRE OVERLOAD
101 GAMES
FreeCell • Klondike • Golf
Pyramid • Yukon • Spider
...and 95 more games!
CAN YOU MASTER THEM ALL? TELEGAMES
ULTIMATE CARD GAMES
GAME BOY ADVANCE
HEARTS • SPADES
CANASTA • CRIBBAGE
EUCHRE • GIN RUMMY
GO FISH • CRAZY EIGHTS
BRIDGE • POKER • BLACKJACK
15 SOLITAIRE GAMES
5 VIDEO POKER VERSIONS
ULTIMATE BRAIN GAMES
CHESS
CHECKERS
MAHJONG
BACKGAMMON
DOMINOES
SINK THE SHIPS
FOUR-IN-A-ROW
REVERSI
FACE CREATOR
Link It Up!
TELEGAMES
ULTIMATE PUZZLE GAMES
1001 PUZZLES
CROSSWORDS
KRISS-KROSS
NUMBER JIG
WORDSEARCH
BACKWORDS
CODEBREAKERS
CRYPTICS
and MANY MORE!
EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
AVAILABLE AT
BEST BUY Thousands of Possibilities. Get yours.
GameStop power to the players
amazon.com
TOYS R US
TELEGAMES®
Web site: www.telegames.com

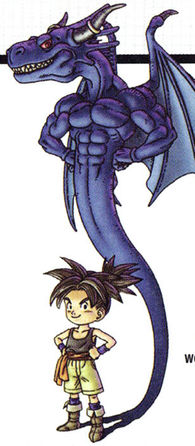
Shadow Play

>BLUE DRAGON PLUS

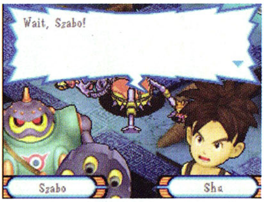
PLATFORM: **DS** • PUBLISHER: **IGNITION**
DEVELOPER: **MISTWALKER/FEEL PLUS/BROWNIE BROWN**
RELEASE: **MARCH 2009**

Despite the genre's sketchy track record, RPG developers just can't resist trying to make real-time strategy games for the Nintendo DS. Like Heroes of Mana and Final Fantasy XII: Revenant Wings, the characters in Blue Dragon Plus all act at once, putting you in the role of a harried general using stylus taps and loops to guide your troops into battle. But unlike some of its predecessors, Blue Dragon Plus is fast-paced and easy to learn, with new enemies entering the battlefield constantly, and little in the way of resource-gathering to break up the action. Your army grows quickly to nearly a dozen heroes, each with a shadow companion that can back up its owner's automatic attacks with powerful spells and skills.

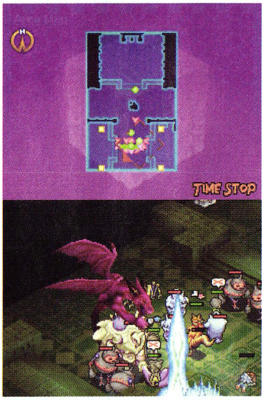
Blue Dragon Plus is a direct sequel to the original Blue Dragon on the Xbox 360, and those new to the series may have trouble catching up with the storyline. But even when the story isn't making sense, it looks great, as it's primarily told through hundreds of short CG cut-scenes that span both screens of the DS. —**CASEY L.**

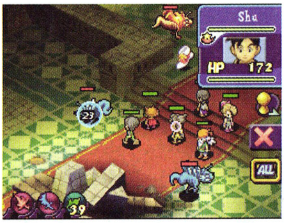


The characters of Blue Dragon Plus were designed by Akira Toriyama of Dragon Ball fame.



Wait, Szabo!



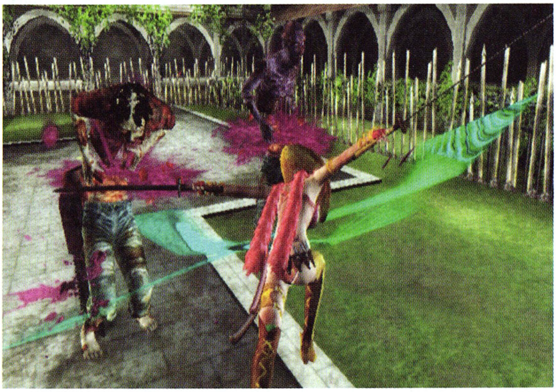


Girl Power

>ONECHANBARA: BIKINI ZOMBIE SLAYERS

PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **D3PUBLISHER**
DEVELOPER: **TAMSOFT** • RELEASE: **Q1 2009**

After getting some more hands-on time with Onechanbara: Bikini Zombie Slayers, we were pleased to discover that there's more to this M-rated game than alluring females and seemingly endless waves of undead foes. OK, so there's not *much* more, but the two playable characters—cowgirl Aya and her schoolgirl sister Saki—have distinct abilities that give them each a unique feel. Aya can dispatch zombies using either one or two samurai swords; when she's dual-wielding, you control her attacks by shaking both the remote and the nunchuk. She can also toss kunai at her foes. Saki carries only a single blade, but she makes up for her smaller weapon cache with a unique spinning swipe attack and a punishing array of bone-crushing throws (which are executed by shaking the nunchuk). The sisters' stories intertwine in single-player mode, and they can fight side-by-side in split-screen co-op mode. Either way, you'll have plenty of enemies to slash and numerous environments to fight them in when the game hits Wii early next year. —**CHRIS H.**



Saki
3 HIT
CANCEL

MLB
SUPERSTARS
$19.99
Multiplayer mini-games!
FRIES
KETCHUP
Indians
ANGELS
TEXAS
Brewers

Baseball has never seen a park like this.

Welcome to the zaniest ballpark ever! Choose from a variety of games to play with your favorite pros and challenge each other to baseball's wacky versions of golf, bocce, piñata, and other original games!

www.2ksports.com/superstars

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

© 2008 Take-Two Interactive Software and its subsidiaries. All rights reserved. 2K Sports, the 2K Sports logo, and Take-Two Interactive Software are all trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc. Major League Baseball trademarks and copyrights are used with permission of Major League Baseball Properties, Inc. Visit the official website at MLB.com © MLBPA - Official Licensee, Major League Baseball Players Association. Visit the Players Choice on the web at www.MLBPlayers.com © MLBP 2008/ MLBPA 2008. Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

Wii

PLAYERS CHOICE

2K SPORTS

Band Together

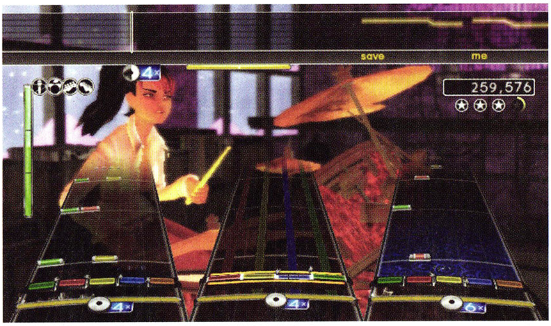
>ROCK BAND 2

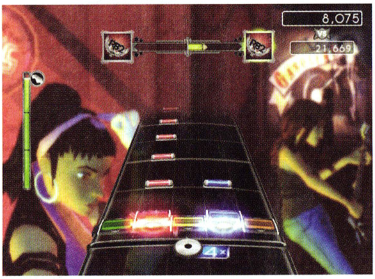
PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **MTV GAMES**
DEVELOPER: **PI STUDIOS** • RELEASE: **DECEMBER 2008**

The full Rock Band experience—that's exactly what you'll get when Rock Band 2 is released at the end of the year. Unlike last year's game, you're getting everything that the Xbox 360 and PS3 versions have, from a full-fledged World Tour mode to create-a-character to online play.

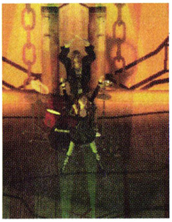
Nothing's really changed since the first game, gameplay-wise, where you're singing, drumming or playing guitar or bass; however, the game is being released with some new equipment that has a few improvements (quieter pads on the drums, for example). One of the more significant hardware upgrades is the ability to daisy-chain the peripherals' USB dongles so you don't need to power up a separate USB hub to play with all of the instruments. It's a small detail, but it's a nice touch, especially if you've got a limited number of electrical outlets.

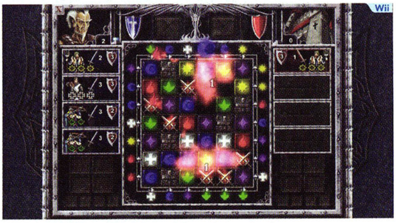
With 84 songs to start with, the song selection is varied and you can always download more songs later (if your Wii's internal memory is full, you can save them to an SD card). Another 30 downloadable songs are slated to be available at launch, so start saving those Wii Points now. —**JUSTIN C.**





If you want to rock out without worrying about scores, there's a new No Fail mode.



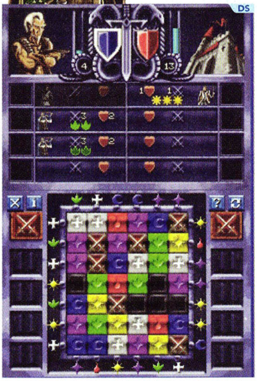


Besting Bejeweled

>PUZZLE KINGDOMS

PLATFORM: **Wii, DS** • PUBLISHER: **ZOO GAMES**
DEVELOPER: **INFINITE INTERACTIVE** • RELEASE: **Q1 2009**

Last year's Puzzle Quest: Challenge of the Warlords surprised gamers by combining the casual addictiveness of Bejeweled-style puzzles with RPG elements such as character growth and magic attacks. Now spin-off Puzzle Kingdoms takes the formula a step further with deeper puzzles and an army of troops at your disposal. As you travel the land of Etheria, rather than engaging in conventional combat, you meet your enemies in puzzle deathmatches. As in Puzzle Quest, it's all about matching colors, but instead of simple gem-swapping you slide whole rows and columns to form groups of the same color, accumulating mana that you can harness to use against your opponent. In addition to mana-based spells, you have various troops who can attack once their mana gauges fill. Your enemies can return fire, however, and once your units are KOed they're gone for good. Limited resources make you consider each move carefully, which gives Puzzle Kingdoms a more hardcore feel than its predecessor. —**CAROLYN G.**



A STEVEN SPIELBERG | EA GAME
BOOM BLOX™
The Video Game

Wii

EVERYONE
E
Cartoon Violence
Comic Mischief
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

IT WILL BLOW YOU AWAY!

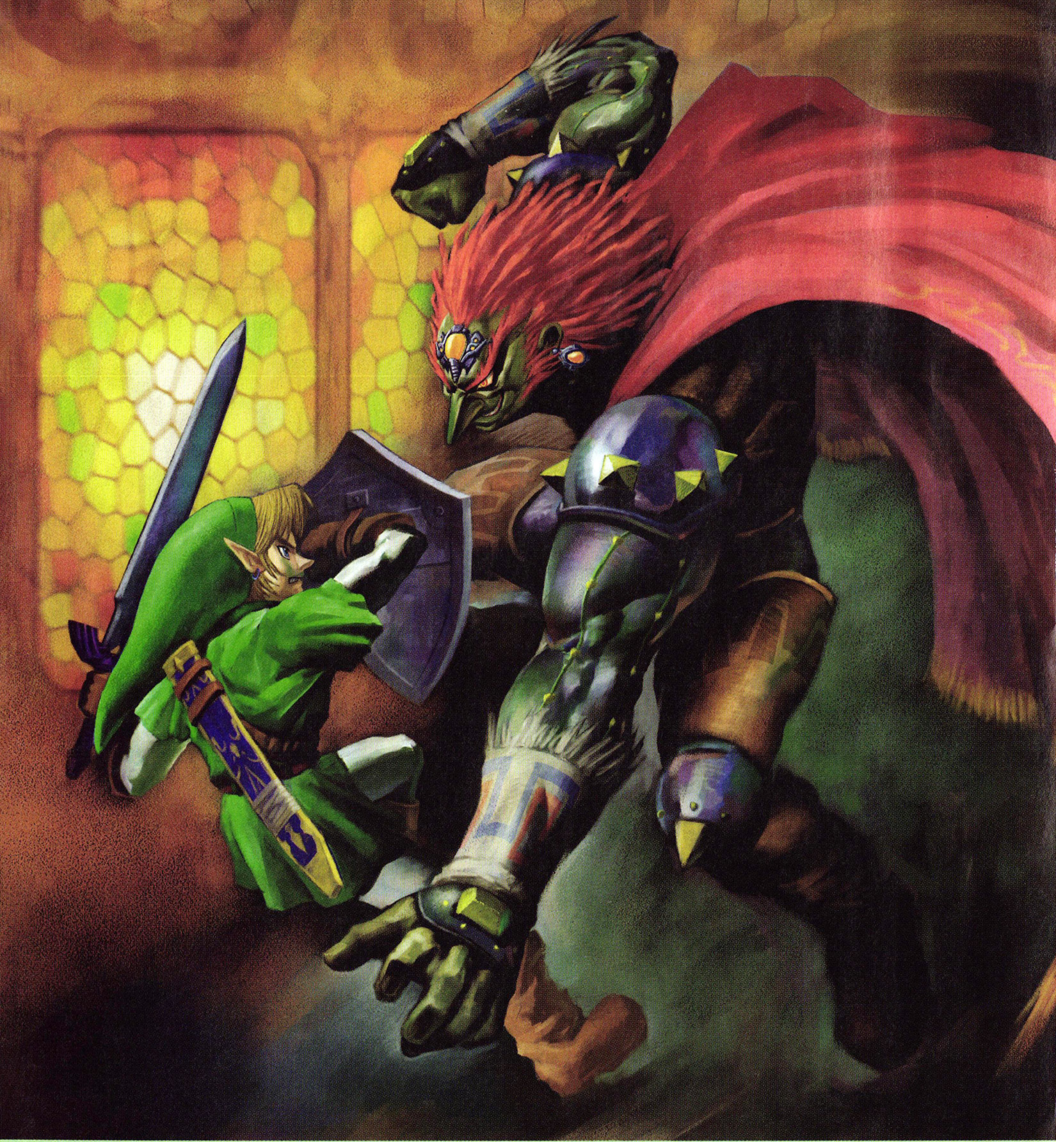
In a world...filled with 300 block-busting challenges and 30 bombastic characters...it's up to you AND your friends to Throw...Grab...and Blast your way through the most explodiest adventure YOU'VE ever played!

WWW.BOOMBLOX.EA.COM

© 2008 Electronic Arts Inc. EA, the EA logo and BOOM BLOX are trademarks or registered trademarks of Electronic Arts Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries. All Rights Reserved. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo.

TEST *of* TIME

10 years since its historic release, we revisit The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time with series mastermind Eiji Aonuma.



BY CHRIS SLATE

WHILE COUNTLESS GAMES have been released over the past 10 years, precious few are considered turning points in gaming history. Fewer still can be credited with introducing features that have helped shape nearly every game to come after them. And only one game—a decade after its release—still holds the all-time highest average review scores. ▲ There are classic video games, and then there is The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time. ▲ On November 23, 1998, gaming changed forever. While Nintendo 64 players were still in awe of the groundbreaking 3-D gameplay introduced in Super Mario 64, Ocarina of Time exploded onto the scene with an epic, immersive adventure unlike any we'd ever experienced. It redefined the adventure genre with vast 3-D environments, a revolutionary lock-on camera, cinematic storytelling, new types of puzzles, and much more. ▲ Shigeru Miyamoto, famed creator of the Zelda series, provided the vision for a team of supertalented game creators that included Eiji Aonuma, who now oversees all Zelda titles. Ocarina was the first Zelda project for Aonuma, but he dove right in and designed six of the game's dungeons, crafted puzzles, worked on the battle system, and more. ▲ Aonuma took a break from crafting his next Zelda adventure (still top secret) to look back at the game that shaped his career. It's clear that the fans aren't the only ones still smitten with this timeless classic.

NINTENDO POWER Ten years after its release, The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time is still revered by many as the best and most influential game ever made. Why do you think it has made such a large and lasting impact?

EIJI AONUMA Unlike Shigeru Miyamoto, who had a firm idea of what he wanted to make based on his experiences developing 3-D games in the past, I was working on a 3-D game for the first time. Since there weren't any similar games to emulate, I groped around in the dark for quite some time. In the end, when I heard the testers' response, I heaved a sigh of relief.

Since there was nothing to copy, we were forced to be original. I believe that's why we were able to create a game that inspired a fresh sense of wonder in its players. Working on later games in the series, I was skeptical we could ever make anything to surpass it. I think Ocarina, as a 3-D action-adventure game presenting a miniature world within which players could move around freely, set a new standard.

What would you say is the defining characteristic of the Zelda series, and how is that reflected in Ocarina of Time?

It's the feeling that you have completely entered into the world of the game and had the same experiences as Link, the main character.

Virtual reality is an overused term these days, but I think the miniature world that Miyamoto created with Ocarina was exactly that. If you cut a tree with a sword, it sounds like you're cutting a tree; if you slash at stone, it sounds like you're hitting stone. In a game like that, a lot of simple elements that are easy to overlook build up so that rather than feeling like you've played a game, you feel like you've experienced something.

Miyamoto always says the parts of a game that are the most skillfully done show a great deal of consideration. To put it more clearly, the developer guesses what the player will feel or want to do and prepares a response to that. If that response is completely natural and unobtrusive, it shows the developer's consideration of the player. When making a new game in a series, you do, of course, have to instill it with new ideas and surprises, but the attention paid to the more subtle aspects ... is what gives the Zelda games their distinct flavor.

What were the earliest design goals for Ocarina?

We wanted to create a game so original that it couldn't be compared to any other game. We didn't post it on the wall as an official group goal, but the team naturally tackled the project in that spirit.

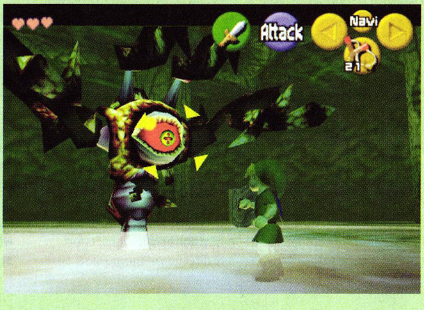
At the beginning of development, everyone wrote down on slips of paper what they wanted to achieve in a 3-D game. We put those on the wall and chose the ones we would actually reflect in the game. As we sorted through the ideas, some of them stood out, and we'd think, "Nobody has ever done this, right?" or "It would be awesome if we could to this, but can we?" We looked for what we wanted to see in a game and for what only we could do—what other companies wouldn't.

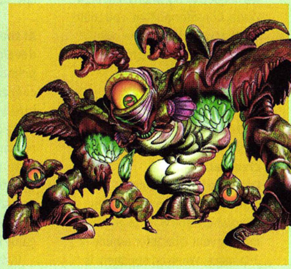
When I think about it now, I realize no amount of time would have been enough to chase down such grandiose dreams. We extended development time after time, and in the end spent three years working on it. I'm extremely grateful that the company believed

Ocarina of Time was the spark that set off my lifelong love of Zelda games. Zelda was, is, and always will be my favorite series.
—ZELDAGAMEGOD

READERS REMEMBER

[Below] The many advancements brought about by Ocarina's shift from 2-D to 3-D (such as Z-targeting) allowed players to interact with their environment as never before. [Right] The dungeon bosses were massive, imaginative, and among the series' best.

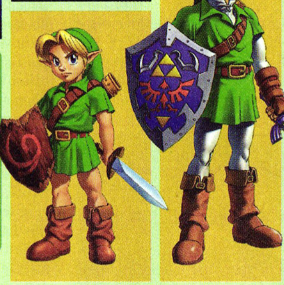




After finding the Kokiri Sword and slaying the first boss I was hooked, and became a Zelda fan for life.
—THE HYRULE FOOL

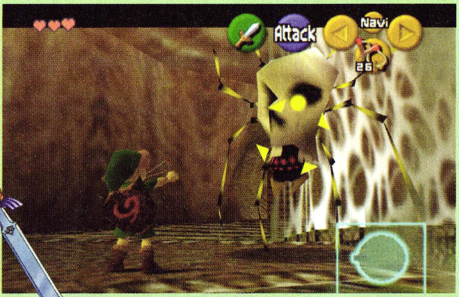
READERS REMEMBER

Whether you prefer Link as a kid or an adult, Ocarina of Time had you covered.



I was always the "brain" telling my friend what to do, and he was the "muscle" who pressed the buttons. We had such fun times that it brings tears to my eyes when I think about it.
—REFOREVER

READERS REMEMBER



[Above] The introduction of the lock-on camera (referred to as Z Targeting in Ocarina) made precise combat possible in a 3-D world, and has been incorporated into nearly every third-person action-adventure game since.

in us (especially because Miyamoto was with us) and gave us the time we needed.

When creating Ocarina, you didn't have the luxury of playing similar games for inspiration. What, if anything, could the development team look to for guidance?
As you say, there were no similar 3-D games to use as examples at that time. However, since many on the team had worked on development of Super Mario 64 and Star Fox 64, we had a certain degree of know-how when it came to making a 3-D game. Moreover, Miyamoto had been involved in game design for all of those games, so from the very beginning he was able to point us in the right direction based on what had been effective in previous games, what needed to be improved, and what we needed to try when it came to Zelda. Considering that, you could say that we looked to our own company's 3-D games for quite a lot of guidance.

The lock-on targeting was one of Ocarina's most profound innovations. What led to its creation?
Everyone has probably experienced how hard it can be to go where you want to go when moving your character around in 3-D space. When an opponent is approaching, in order to attack with your sword, you've got to position yourself in such a way as to hit it, and that can be quite difficult.

Another problem in games with a third-person perspective is that the camera must follow around the player character. Opponents with a large range of movement soon fall outside the frame. Losing track of your opponent's location happens much too often.

That was one obvious problem with Mario 64, so when it came to Zelda, which features a lot of swordfights, we introduced "Z-targeting," by which the player could lock on to an opponent. The opponent would stay in front of the player, all the player's attacks would converge on the opponent, and the camera would always capture both the opponent and the player onscreen.

This lock-on system was developed by Miyamoto and Yoshiaki Koizumi, our 3-D system director. Together with the programmers, they worked directly on adjusting game operability, camera-rotation speed, and even sound effects.

At the very start of the game's development, what were the primary goals (and possible concerns) with taking the series into 3-D?
In making a 3-D Zelda game, our primary goal was to have swordfights go smoothly using lock-on targeting. If we hadn't been able to do that, I don't think we would have ever successfully achieved a Zelda game in 3-D.

In other areas, we needed a cut-and-try tool by which we could easily carry out a process of repeated trial and error resulting in solutions to the problems we encountered. With Ocarina of Time, we began serious development of a tool for freely arranging objects in 3-D space.

Before I joined development of Zelda, I spent two years supervising 3-D games being developed by overseas developers, where use of such tools was common. It was easy to cut and try, but one time when I suggested they try something, I was told they couldn't because the tool didn't have the necessary function. I was surprised. I couldn't understand why they wouldn't do it, even though it would make the game better, just because their tool didn't have the capability.

So when it came to introducing a tool for Zelda, I made sure we would be able to enhance its functions easily. Then we continued to improve the tool even as we used it. In fact, we added so much to it that in the end it became slow, but if we hadn't had that tool, there's no way just two level designers could have made that game.

Ocarina added a strong cinematic feel to the Zelda series, which has continued with every subsequent console Zelda title. In creating Ocarina, how did you define the appropriate style of storytelling for a Zelda game?
The scenario directors decided upon the scenario for Ocarina in consultation with Shigeru Miyamoto. I don't know exactly how they came up with it, but I know that Miyamoto was especially interested in having Link grow up, meet a girl...there is this protecting entity, and he put a lot of effort into direction of the movies.

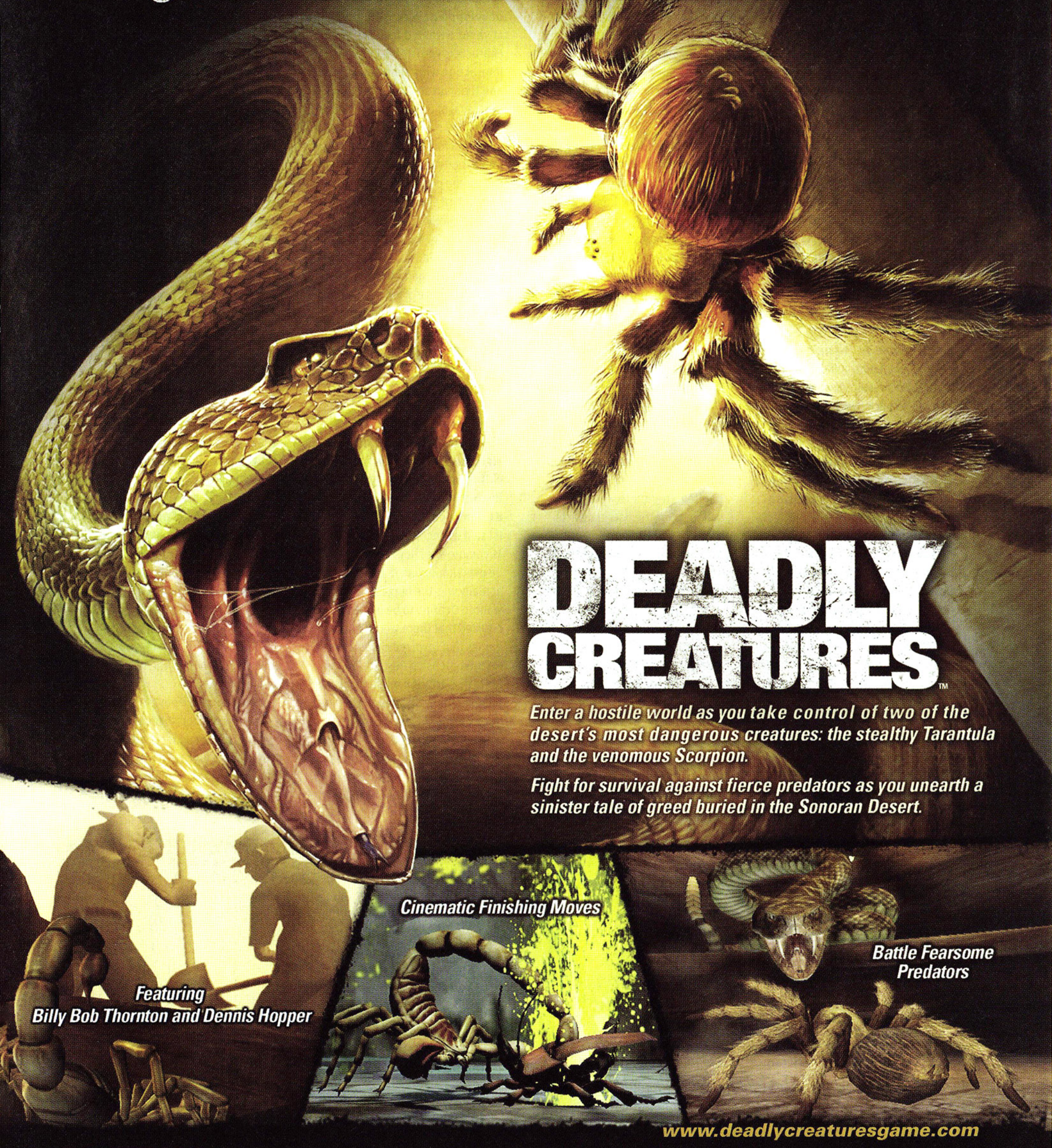
Miyamoto's direction focused more on how players who continued playing the game would feel than on constructing a plot per se. For example, he took great care in the execution of emotionally moving scenes, such as when the child Link first leaves the forest and is impressed by how large the land of Hyrule is.

What were the toughest design challenges in taking Zelda from 2-D to 3-D?
In a 2-D game, in which you look down on the game field from above, where everything is and how far away it is are both very clear. A lot of puzzlelike games were based on that characteristic. However, in 3-D games everything lines up in perspective and it becomes difficult to attain a sense of location and distance, so the player has to keep track of where everything is. If we had kept the same approach as for 2-D games, Ocarina would have been significantly more difficult and no fun at all.

Also, one concept that doesn't exist in 2-D is height. There's a limit to how much height a camera can capture, so if you're not careful how you develop gameplay utilizing height, some players won't notice the added dimension and will have trouble. We really racked our brains for a way to give users appropriate hints without simply giving away the answer.

Except for perhaps the original NES Zelda, no other game in the series has introduced as many

"One of the most compelling third-party games to hit Nintendo's console" - IGN


Cinematic Finishing Moves
Battle Fearsome Predators
Featuring
Billy Bob Thornton and Dennis Hopper

DEADLY CREATURES™

Enter a hostile world as you take control of two of the desert's most dangerous creatures: the stealthy Tarantula and the venomous Scorpion.

Fight for survival against fierce predators as you unearth a sinister tale of greed buried in the Sonoran Desert.

www.deadlycreaturesgame.com

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Alcohol Reference
Blood
Mild Language
Violence

Wii™ BEST OF E3 AWARDS '08 RAINBOW THQ®

©2008 THQ Inc. Developed by Rainbow Studios. Deadly Creatures, Rainbow Studios, THQ and their respective logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of THQ Inc. All rights reserved. All other trademarks, logos and copyrights are the property of their respective owners. Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo.

new ideas as Ocarina. Was this simply a byproduct of making the game 3-D, or were there any other development goals that drove such a high degree of innovation?
For the most part, the technical innovations in Ocarina were the result of Shigeru Miyamoto taking what he had learned from working on 3-D games in the past and adapting it to the Zelda series. Without that know-how, we would not have even been able to turn Zelda into a 3-D experience.

After making Ocarina, Miyamoto expressed to a reporter that he was worried that such a unique game like this wouldn't feel like Zelda. Over and above simply making the game 3-D, he paid attention to how unique he could make the game. This resulted in a whole new unique experience, even in terms of technical innovations.

Every Zelda title seems to have its own distinct gameplay hook, and the time travel in Ocarina remains one of the best. Why do you think it worked so well?
We brought in the time-travel element to allow players to enjoy playing both a younger and an older Link. Making it so that events during Link's childhood would have an effect on the world when he was older was similar to the dual-reality concept portrayed with the Light and the Dark Worlds in A Link to the Past. We decided to have gameplay inherit this structure from the earlier game.

Then we created the character of Sheik, made the ocarina to serve as a critical item, and developed the surprise twist by which the peaceful world of Link's childhood is revealed to have changed dramatically by the time he wakes up years later. Overall, I think you could say we created a game with an effective structure.

How did the idea of playing the ocarina come about?
Wouldn't you say the controller for the Nintendo 64 looks a bit like an ocarina?

An ocarina had existed in A Link to the Past as well, but it was Miyamoto who suggested making it something that could actually be played.

While brainstorming for Ocarina of Time, we knew we wanted to include magic. Eventually we decided that instead of using a magic item such as the ocarina via a single punch of a button, it would be more fun for the player to memorize a melody and actually play it.

Altogether there were 12 melodies for the ocarina, each composed of five notes. It was difficult for the composer to select five notes that seem like you're creating major and minor sounds.

Ever since then the idea of playing a musical instrument has appeared in different forms in the series, and Wii Music places that idea front and center. I think Miyamoto has been carrying around that idea ever since we made Ocarina of Time.

Ocarina gave players their first look at Ganondorf's human form, and did a lot to flesh out the character. What was the development goal with him?
Miyamoto wanted to make characters with appeal, to make interaction with them enjoyable, and that had an influence on our portrayal of Ganondorf, the villain, as well. By having him first appear in human form and then transform into a monster dominated by evil during the climax, I think we did a good job of showing him also as a tragic figure who was not purely an evil villain, but a real person ruled by greed.

Ever since then, he's shown up more and more often as a person. Recently, Ganon will often turn into a monster partway through a game and then return to being human again. That's how strong his human side is.

The sight of Link riding atop Epona might be the game's signature image. Was horseback riding included simply because it would be fun, to serve a game design need, or ...?
If I said we included Epona because Miyamoto likes horses, that would be oversimplifying it, but that actually was the biggest factor. He wanted Ocarina to be unique, and realized that there weren't any games that involved riding a horse. He thought using Pegasus Shoes for transportation might be alright, but eventually decided that riding a horse, something you can interact with, would be more fun.

However, while Miyamoto was intent on the idea because he liked horses, he knew it would be hard to accomplish. But then he was reassured by an experimental version presented by Koizumi, and all of a sudden it became a reality.

Because the ability to call the horse and ride it were so close to Miyamoto, whose role was almost like that of a director, the development team felt a lot of pressure to get it right.

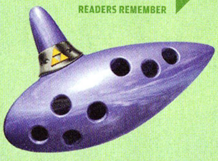
Ocarina featured some of the series' best and most influential music, and together with the somewhat melancholy world, the game created a very unique atmosphere. What types of emotions was the team hoping to cause within players?
I think the reason many people feel that the music for Ocarina is melancholic is largely because of the ocarina melodies. They sound pretty, but there's also something sad about them. Perhaps every time players hear them, they are left with a melancholic impression of the whole game.

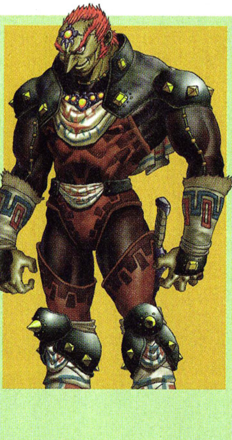
Many new types of puzzles were added with Ocarina. Was this a focus during development, and were there any new goals with the dungeons, in particular?
The goal of the dungeons was to create a contrast to gameplay in the outdoor environment, so we did deliberately shift the focus on solving puzzles.

With the move from 2-D to 3-D, it becomes difficult to understand how the rooms connect and where everything is without a map. At first I made a test dungeon, and even I got lost. So in the final

Ocarina of Time has the best video game songs ever, such as the Hyrule Field tune and the Gerudo Valley theme. When I have kids, I'm going to lull them to sleep with Zelda's Lullaby! —**WEZZA**

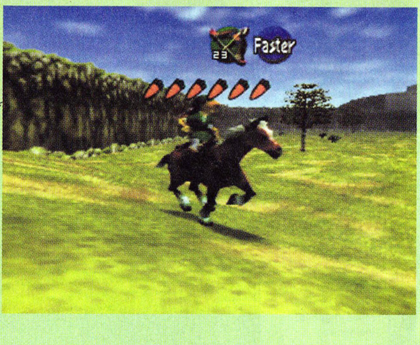
READERS REMEMBER





[Above] The ocarina melodies are among the series' best tunes. [Right] Ocarina of Time introduced Ganon's human form.

Link riding Epona across Hyrule Field has to be the game's most enduring image. No previous game had included horseback riding.



THE EPIC ADVENTURE CONTINUES – EXCLUSIVELY ON NINTENDO DS™!

PRINCE OF PERSIA®

THE FALLEN KING

TRY THE DEMO
Download at any retail
DS Download Station
or through the
Nintendo Channel

Explore a stunningly unique artistic rendition of ancient Persia across over 50 maps.

Master the acrobatic fighting style of the most agile warrior of all time.

IN STORES DECEMBER 4TH, 2008

PRINCEOFPERSIAGAME.COM

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Mild Fantasy Violence

NINTENDO DS

ign.com BEST OF E3 2008 NOMINEE

UBISOFT

© 2008 Ubisoft Entertainment. All Rights Reserved. Based on Prince of Persia® created by Jordan Mechner. Ubisoft, Ubi.com, and the Ubisoft logo are trademarks of Ubisoft Entertainment in the U.S. and/or other countries. Prince of Persia is a trademark of Jordan Mechner in the U.S. and/or other countries used under license by Ubisoft Entertainment. Nintendo DS is a trademark of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo.

dungeons that I designed, after you defeat a miniboss, a shortcut appears between the entrance to the dungeon and that boss's room. That way once you defeat a miniboss you can go outside for a little break before continuing on with the dungeon.

Also, we included events for each dungeon involving the various characters important to the story so that the dungeons came across as more than just puzzle-solving exercises.

The Sheik character—and his secret identity—remains one of the biggest twists of any Zelda story. Can you give us any insight into how, and why, the character was created?
I don't remember exactly at what stage of development we got the idea for Sheik, but if you look at when Sheik uses a harp to teach Link the ocarina melody, you know that we must have included that scene after the ocarina had come to function as a key item, so I suppose it was during the latter half of development.

After the time warp, when Link wakes up seven years later, he's extremely concerned about what has become of Zelda. If he found out right away, that wouldn't be very interesting, but if he didn't know until the very end, and then he learned that she'd been captured by Ganon all that time, that would be even worse.

When she was a little girl, Princess Zelda had shown spirit by pegging Ganondorf for a villain, so we didn't want her to be the kind of princess who would just go into hiding. That gave birth to the idea of Sheik, a mysterious character whose loyalties are unclear.

What was the impetus for creating the game's multiple races—Gorons, Zoras, the Gerudo, Kokiri, etc.—and what was the process like for creating them?
In creating a unique cast of characters, we thought it would be effective to have nonhuman races, each of them invested with different lifestyles and mannerisms. Almost from the beginning we had decided on Kokiri to live in the forest, Gorons to live in the mountains, and Zoras to live in the water.

At first we imagined the Zoras as monsters sort of like mermen, who would be antagonists to humans. The original concept was strong. However, after we had decided Princess Ruto was going to be one of the sages, that image didn't seem to fit anymore, so we changed them to be a friendly race more like humans.

Each of the races has a character fated to become one of the sages later on. We named them after towns in The Adventure of Link so it would appear that the towns had been named after them. (In the world of Zelda, the events of Ocarina of Time occur before the events of The Adventure of Link.)

Could you tell us about any gameplay elements that may have been planned for Ocarina, but were cut or eventually used in later games?
At the time we were developing Ocarina of Time, not many games had both day and night. In order to heighten the sense of reality within the game, we thought changing from day to night would be important, so we set some events to happen during the day and others to happen at night.

In the game, we were only able to completely differentiate day and night, and there was no in-between. But in planning these events to occur at different times of the day, we learned how to control the characters' actions in real time as measured within the game. Afterward we wondered if other types of gameplay would be possible using that system, and the result was the three-day cycle in Majora's Mask.

Personally speaking, what is your favorite moment in the game?
One of my favorite scenes is one that Miyamoto really put a lot of work into, and I can remember it clearly to this day. It's when Link leaves his home, the forest, and sets out into the unknown world and sees the vast expanse of Hyrule spread out before him.

Along with the stirring background music, the feeling that the adventure begins now suddenly wells up within you. It's a truly impressive scene.

What does the game's success and longevity mean to you?
I'm happy that a title I worked on some time ago remains highly praised to this day, but that also shows how none of the subsequent games in the series have surpassed it. As someone who is still working on the series, I have mixed feelings about that.

Because I haven't yet surpassed it, I can't quit. Surprisingly, that simple motivation may be the reason I continue to work on the Zelda series.

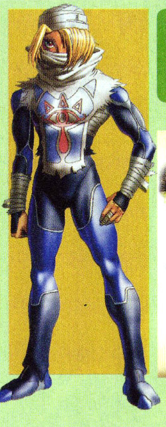
If there's one thing you could go back and change about Ocarina, what would it be?
I would change the Iron Boots from equipment to an item. If they could be turned on or off at the touch of a button, the Water Temple would be more fun. I wish I could travel back via a time warp and fix that.

What lessons did you learn during the creation of Ocarina that you will carry with you into future games in the series?
I learned that when something is fun to make and gamers have fun playing it, you've created something truly original.

Luckily, when Ocarina came out, 3-D games hadn't taken over the market yet. To do something no one else had done was relatively easy. But now, finding something like that is extremely difficult. However, finding something new and giving it to players is a game designer's duty. In the future, I want to make something—not limited to Zelda—that takes players by surprise.

Just as it was with Ocarina, I believe that if we keep on believing we can do it, someday we'll find what we seek.

[Right] The revelation of Sheik's secret identity stands as one of the Zelda series' best twists.



I almost threw the controller during the Water Temple (urgh!), and I recall getting teary-eyed when Link left Saria in the forest scene. How tender! —**DAREN B.**

READERS REMEMBER

I will stay here as the Forest Sage and help you...

My fondest memory of the game is when Sheik revealed himself (or herself, in this case) as Princess Zelda. The game taught me to expect the unexpected. —**ROBERT J.**

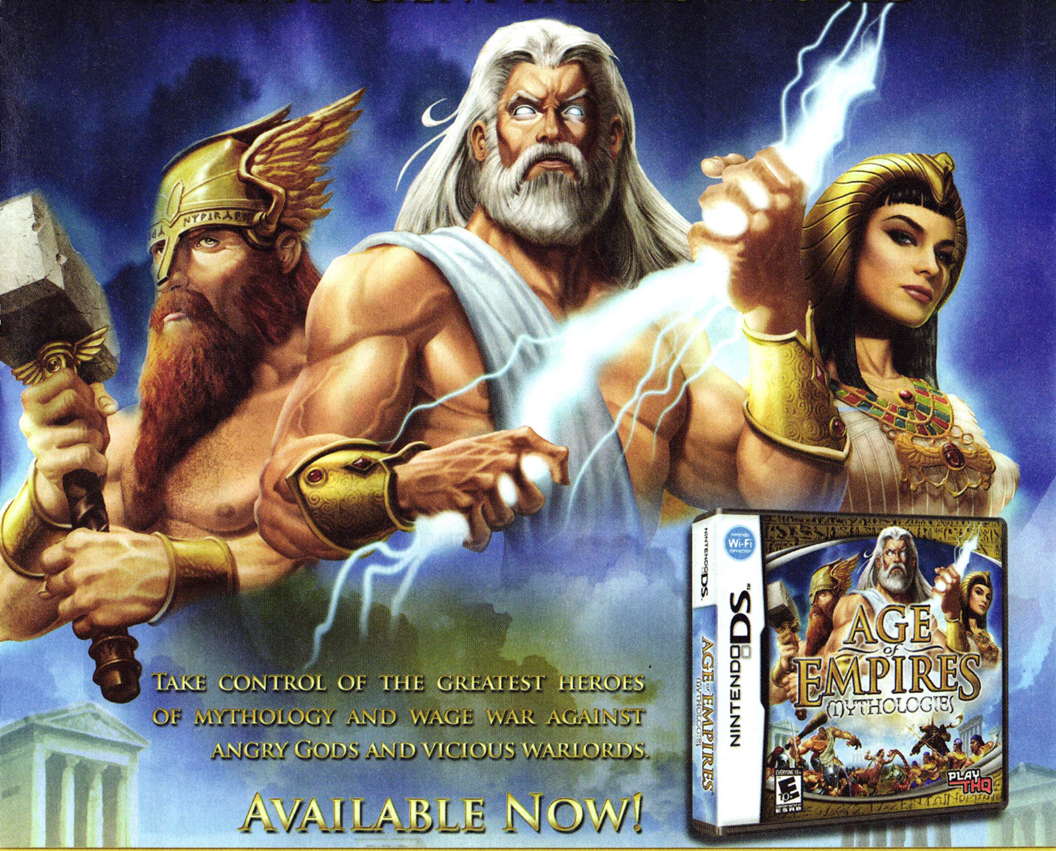
READERS REMEMBER

Ocarina of Time gave such a pure sense of adventure, with a seemingly endless Hyrule Field that provided such a great feeling of exploration with so many things to do. —**THE MASKED LEMON**

READERS REMEMBER

N
HYRULE
WORLD ATLAS

SHAPE THE DESTINY OF THREE CULTURES IN AN ANCIENT FANTASY WORLD



TAKE CONTROL OF THE GREATEST HEROES OF MYTHOLOGY AND WAGE WAR AGAINST ANGRY GODS AND VICIOUS WARLORDS.

AVAILABLE NOW!

PLAYTHQ.COM/AGEOFEMPIRES

COMMAND HEROES, ARMIES AND MYTHICAL UNITS

SMITE YOUR ENEMIES ON THE BATTLE FIELD

SUMMON THE POWER OF THE GODS

EVERYONE 10+
E 10+
Mild Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

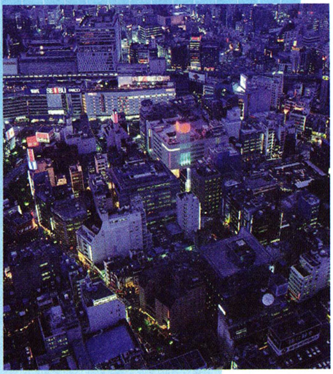
NINTENDO DS GRIPTONITE ENSEMBLE STUDIOS Microsoft game studios PLAY THQ

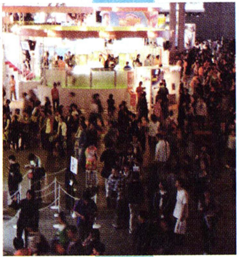
© 2007 Microsoft Corporation. Microsoft, the Microsoft Game Studios logo, Age of Empires and Ensemble Studios are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies. Developed by Griptonite Games, a Division of Foundation 9 Entertainment. THQ, PlayTHQ and their respective logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of THQ Inc. All rights reserved. All other trademarks, logos and copyrights are property of the respective owners. Nintendo DS is a trademark of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo.

IT CAME FROM JAPAN

東京 ゲームショウ

Japanese video game developers are hard at work creating some of the most astonishing Wii and DS titles yet. Nintendo Power recently ventured across the Pacific for Tokyo Game Show 2008 to see, play, and get the exclusive behind-the-scenes stories on the next tsunami of hits from the Land of the Rising Sun.



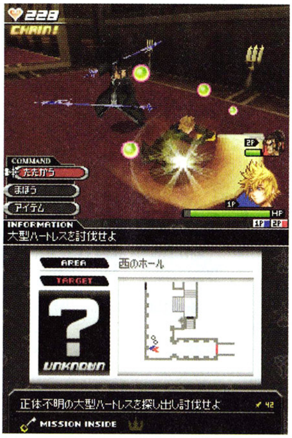


それは It was the biggest video game show of the year, held in the biggest city in the world: the 2008 Tokyo Game Show. As they do every fall, all the major Japanese third-party video game publishers—Square Enix, SNK, Capcom, Marvelous, Sega, Konami, Namco Bandai, Hudson, Tecmo, and more—converged on the Makuhari Messe convention center to display their latest and greatest wares. The crowds were massive, the lights were bright, and the booth babes were never short on fliers to pass out, but your intrepid Nintendo Power editors scoured the show floor and beyond to speak with developers, get the details on the latest game announcements, and go hands-on with hotly anticipated titles such as MadWorld, Kingdom Hearts 358/2 Days, Phantasy Star Ø, and Tenchu 4. Nintendo systems dominated the event, and while we don't have nearly the space to show everything that was on display at this year's TGS, the games on the following pages are the cream of the Wii and DS crop. Although not all of the titles are confirmed for North America yet, they'll give us plenty to look forward to in the weeks and months to come.

BY CHRIS HOFFMAN クリス・ホフマン & STEVE THOMASON スティーブ・トマソン

KINGDOM HEARTS 358/2 DAYS

Any fears that the DS-exclusive Kingdom Hearts 358/2 Days wouldn't be a true Kingdom Hearts game were put to rest once we got our hands on the title at TGS. True, you play as Roxas instead of series protagonist Sora, and you're accompanied by members of the shadowy Organization XIII instead of Donald and Goofy (they're in a yearlong sleep due to the events of Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories while this game is occurring), but as far as gameplay goes, Kingdom Hearts 358/2 Days is a bona fide entry in the series. During our play time we jumped, flew, and fought our way through three environments—Twilight Town (from Kingdom Hearts II), Beast Castle (from *Beauty and the Beast*), and Halloween Town (from *The Nightmare before Christmas*)—and battled some giant Heartless bosses. The game looks great—it features some of the best 3-D yet on the DS—and controls very smoothly; mapping the camera controls to the touch screen is a nice inclusion. Additionally, we engaged in a cooperative four-player mode in which we could select from numerous Organization XIII characters and use their skills to track down and defeat a teleporting chameleonlike creature.

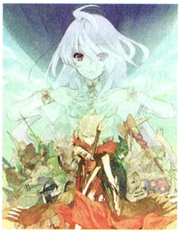


大型ハートレスを討伐せよ

正体不明の大型ハートレスを探し出し討伐せよ

PROFESSOR LAYTON AND THE LAST TIME TRAVEL

The third and perhaps final game in Level-5's Professor Layton series for DS features more of the incredible animation and brain twisters that the series is known for. We played the game only far enough to witness a suspicious explosion when a time-travel experiment goes awry, but apparently much of the story involves the professor and his assistant Luke visiting a London of the future.

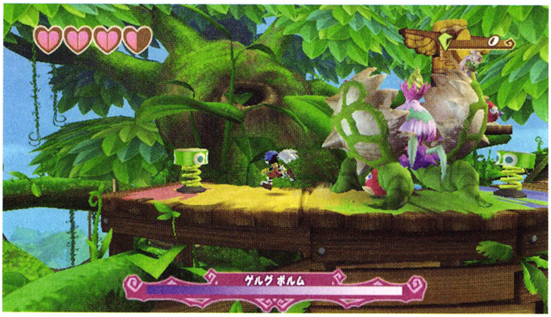


SHINING FORCE FEATHER

We didn't know if Sega still had it in 'em, but Shining Force Feather (DS) feels like a proper, honest-to-goodness Shining Force game. Eschewing the action-heavy bent of recent installments, Feather returns to the series' turn-based roots, albeit with a few modern accoutrements. Movement is no longer grid-based, for instance, and you can string together multiple attacks per turn via timed button presses. No word yet on a US release, but we're keeping our fingers crossed.

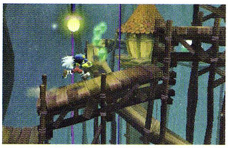
TATSUNOKO VS. CAPCOM

Although licensing issues will likely prevent it from reaching Western shores, Tatsunoko vs. Capcom is shaping up as the best fighting game on Wii this side of Smash Bros. Featuring an accessible three-button attack scheme and tag-team action with Capcom characters and classic Tatsunoko anime heroes (many of which are virtual unknowns to US audiences), the game is packed with ferocious action.



KLONOA: DOOR TO PHANTOMILE

It's been more than 10 years since the first Klonoa hit the PlayStation. Now the floppy-eared titular hero is returning in a remake of his inaugural adventure, and Wii's got him. The Wii version of Klonoa: Door to Phantomile features all the same levels, enemies, and bosses as the original game, now enhanced with far superior visuals and a few tweaks to the gameplay; for example, Klonoa's health meter was quite a bit longer in the TGS demo than it was in the PS1 game. Of course, the game features the same addictive play mechanics that made the original such a hit among platforming fans: the action revolves around grabbing enemies and using them as throwing weapons or as fodder for Klonoa's double-jump. The developers at Namco Bandai promise a healthy amount of new content as well, such as hidden levels, unlockable outfits for Klonoa, and more. The game will be out in December in Japan, but we're still waiting for word of a North American release.



NO MORE HEROES: DESPERATE STRUGGLE

Probably the biggest surprise at TGS was the return of No More Heroes' Travis Touchdown. The erstwhile assassin/pro-wrestling fanatic/frontrunner for Best New Character of 2008 appeared in a very brief teaser trailer for No More Heroes: Desperate Struggle, promising to once again wield the Beam Katana exclusively on Wii. To learn more about this exciting development, we sat down with Goichi Suda (better known as Suda51), the always-engaging head honcho of developer Grasshopper Manufacture.

NINTENDO POWER **We're very excited to hear there's a sequel to No More Heroes on the way! Are you going to be directing the game?**

SUDA 51 I'll be writing the script again, but this time I'm going to watch over the game as an executive director. Someone else from Grasshopper will direct this one.

Is that someone who worked on the original game?

Yes, he was the assistant director on the first No More Heroes.

Excellent. So will the sequel be set in the city of Santa Destroy?

Yes, it will be set once again in Santa Destroy.

What does the subtitle, Desperate Struggle, refer to?

There's a word in Japanese—*shito*. *Shi* means "death" and *to* means "fight." When I tried to find an English translation on the Internet, it came up with "Desperate Struggle." I ran that by [Grasshopper public relations director] Naoko [Mori], and she really liked it, so we decided to go with Desperate Struggle as the subtitle. [Laughs] That's the truth! That's really what happened. Does it sound cool to you?

Definitely.

That's good news. [Laughs]

So I guess working backward then, how does the concept of *shito* fit into the game?

This time, Travis is looking for revenge. It's a serious fight this time, and the word *shito* reflects that. There's a series of Japanese movies called *Jingi Naki Tatakai* that are about the Yakuza. They're really famous in Japan—sort of the equivalent of *The Godfather*. They focus on the relationships between members of the Yakuza. The subtitle for the second one is *Hiroshima Shito Hen*. That roughly translates to *The Desperate Struggle of Hiroshima*. Inspired by that, I wanted No More Heroes 2 to be *The Desperate Struggle of Santa Destroy*. So *Santa Destroy Shito Hen*. There's a really intense fight in *Hiroshima Shito Hen*, and I wanted to sort of recreate that in No More Heroes 2.

The game structure for the first No More Heroes revolved around Travis fighting the different assassins to work his way to the top. What will be the structure for the sequel?

I'm sorry—no comment. [Laughs] Next time, I promise I'll tell you. It's going to be a big surprise!

You mentioned yesterday that the game is a "power-up" of the original No More Heroes. Could you elaborate on that a little bit?

We got lots of emails and letters from fans of No More Heroes, and for the sequel we're going to take all of that feedback into account and try to improve on various facets of the game. For example, we got lots of comments about the open world and the Wii controls. We're going to be using a lot of feedback from the users to improve on those two things. And of course, I once again want to surprise everyone like we did with the first No More Heroes.

Will the game use the new Wii MotionPlus add-on?

Personally, I'd like to use it. But we'll have to check with Marvelous. It's going to be up to him. [Laughs, pointing to translator and Marvelous assistant manager Louis Lamarre]

This is the first time you've done a sequel for one of your games. Would you like to revisit any of your other previous works?

When I finished Killer 7, I didn't necessarily want to make a sequel, but I knew I really wanted to work with Mr. [Shinji] Mikami again.

You seem to be a very busy man these days, yet every time we see you, you're so upbeat and full of energy. How do you do it? Do you ever find time to relax?

Not this week. And actually, I'm not feeling all that energetic right now. [Laughs] Especially since I was up late last night at a party. But yeah, I'm pretty happy.

So what do you do to relax?

When I want to clear my mind, sometimes I'll just drive really fast down the highway. I also like to relax by playing Burnout Paradise. So either driving in real life, or driving in a video game and crashing into other cars. [Laughs]

Hopefully you drive a little more carefully in real life than in Burnout.

[Laughs] Of course! I don't want to die!

Grasshopper's output has really skyrocketed over the past months. Has the company been growing?

Yeah, because we're working on so many projects, Grasshopper is getting bigger and bigger. And actually, I'm starting to realize that Grasshopper is pretty popular. [Laughs] We have a lot of support from outside Japan. I think we're actually more popular overseas than we are in Japan.

Do you foresee the company continuing to grow, and do you ever worry about it getting too big?

Yeah, I do. I think the company right now is just the right size.

You're famously a fan of pro wrestling. So we've gotta ask: who's your favorite pro wrestler of all time?

Bruiser Brody. When I read in the newspaper that he had died, I started to cry even though I was on the train. [Laughs] I was very, very shocked.

So what would happen if Travis and Bruiser Brody happened to meet at the Burger Suplex?

Travis would be really excited and would just try to talk to him all day. And Brody would try to get away from him because Travis would be too excited. [Laughs] Travis would beg to train under Brody.

Thanks again for your time. Any parting words for our readers?

We were really excited and surprised that you guys put the first No More Heroes on your cover. I actually made a huge poster out of that cover and hung it in the office. As for No More Heroes 2, I'm confident that of all the Wii titles you're covering, it will be the most exciting!

TAKE FLIGHT AND
FULFILL YOUR DESTINY.

For the first time, take flight at any time.

Battle fierce new bosses.

Two-player co-op with Spyro and Cynder.

THE LEGEND OF SPYRO™ DAWN OF THE DRAGON

www.spyrothedragon.com

Available on
PlayStation® 2 computer entertainment system
and PLAYSTATION® 3 computer entertainment system

XBOX 360 LIVE

EVERYONE 10+™
E 10+
Fantasy Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

TANTALUS

Wii

NINTENDO DS

ACTIVISION®

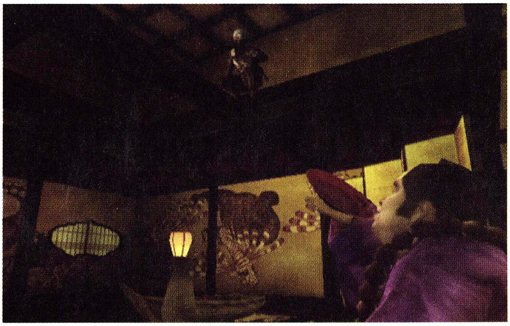
© 2008 Sierra Entertainment, Inc. Spyro, Sierra and the Sierra logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Sierra Entertainment, Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries and Activision is a registered trademark of Activision Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION" and "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Wii and Nintendo DS are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license from Microsoft. All other trademarks are property of their respective owners.

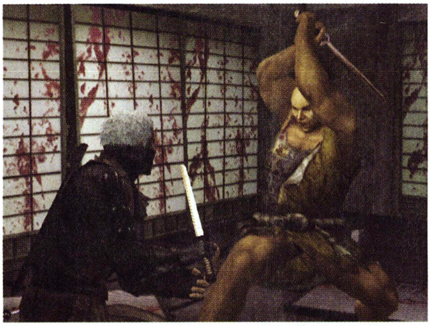
activision.com

TENCHU 4: ART OF THE NINJA

Ninjas have long been a staple of our fine hobby, but Tenchu is one of the few series to reflect the true nature of these elite assassins: stealth. Part four, headed exclusively to Wii early next year, is no different. If you try to run around and confront your foes head-on, you will die, and die quickly. Instead, you must use your surroundings to your advantage, sneaking up on the enemy and extinguishing his life before he even knows you're there. And Tenchu 4 makes going undetected easier than ever before. A dark mist connotes places where protagonists Rikimaru and Ayame can hide in the shadows, and our heroes turn black to indicate when they're obscured from sight (graciously eliminating the guesswork of figuring out if a nearby guard will be able to spot you). Of course, light is a ninja's worst enemy, and you can douse torches with water or blow out candles to create new patches of darkness.

Once you've snuck up on an enemy, pressing the A Button initiates a "Hissatsu" stealth kill. The exact method by which you dispatch your unsuspecting foe—snapping his neck or running him through with his own sword, for instance—is determined by simple flicks of the Wii remote or nunchuk. There's also a number of cool-looking, context-sensitive Hissatu for when your ninja strikes from various hiding places such as a pond, some bushes, or up in the rafters. And when two or more enemies are in close proximity, you can take them all out at once by completing a quick sequence of button presses and/or controller motions. In the unfortunate event that you're spotted, the camera switches to a first-person perspective for a sword duel with your pursuer. Naturally, you slash with the Wii remote to attack, and you can parry your opponent's strikes by holding the remote as indicated by an onscreen prompt. These confrontations are brutally difficult, however, which encourages you to avoid getting caught in the first place.





INTERVIEW **KEISUKE KANAYAMA**

Return of the Masters

Since the first two games debuted on the original PlayStation, the Tenchu series has lost much of its luster. Fortunately, Acquire, the studio responsible for those early titles, is back at the helm for Tenchu 4 after an eight-year hiatus. We chatted with director Keisuke Kanayama about his team's long-awaited reunion with Rikimaru and Ayame.

NINTENDO POWER **It's been a while since Acquire last developed a Tenchu game. How did your return to the series come about, and what's it been like to work on another Tenchu after all these years?**

KEISUKE KANAYAMA Although we worked on many titles that were not released in the US, such as Kamiwaza and the Shinobido series, we're extremely happy to have the opportunity to come back to the Tenchu series, and especially to work with the characters Rikimaru and Ayame again.

How do you feel about the direction the series had taken since Acquire last worked on it?

There have been several new characters and side stories that made their way into the Tenchu series. Our goal with Tenchu 4 was to take it back to basics and create a realistic narrative that brings Rikimaru and Ayame back to the center.

The game seems a bit more linear than previous installments, especially with the Mind's Eye that shows players where to go. Was this a conscious decision, perhaps to make it easier for players to feel like a badass ninja?

Compared to the "open world" feeling of the previous titles, Tenchu 4 is definitely more focused and the goals are clearer. The Mind's Eye will direct players to the simplest route, but players who take the time to explore will find plenty of alternate routes and hidden items, and entirely new sections will open up. Many players have seen the Shinobi Cat in screenshots, and there are a lot more similar items for players to discover.

What would you say is the biggest thing that sets Tenchu 4 apart from other games in the series?

The biggest change is the focus on light and shadow in your environment. In previous Tenchu games, you could only hide behind objects, like boxes or trees. In Tenchu 4, you must use tools to take out lights and create shadow to hide in. Once you're hidden, enemies can't easily detect you, and that's when you strike. But the environment can easily turn against you; one mission during a heavy storm brings the added danger that a flash of lighting may reveal your location!

What would you say to fans of the series to convince them to play Tenchu 4? Conversely, what

To help you stay covert, you'll find a number of useful items during your travels. There are shuriken, of course, as well as a fishing rod that lets you snag keys from afar. You can even carry around a cat whose meows fool guards into thinking the rustling they just heard came from a harmless kitty rather than a deadly ninja.

One thing we noticed during our play test is that the game seems to be much more linear than previous installments. Furthermore, blue flames are placed throughout each level to point you in the right direction, and a new Mind's Eye ability displays footsteps to indicate precisely where you're supposed to go next. The upside of this is that getting lost, which tends to detract from the whole conceit of being an elite ninja, is nearly impossible.

With its tight controls, satisfying stealth gameplay, and attractive visuals, Tenchu 4 looks like a return to form for the series. Early 2009 is shaping up to be an embarrassment of riches for Wii owners.

Chris & Steve's Bogus Journey?

Visiting Japan and attending TGS is a blast, but it's not all fun and games. Here are some of the low-lights of the trip.

The phrase "packed like sardines" perfectly describes what it's like to be on the Tokyo rail system during morning rush hour. Sadly, Mike Haggar did not march through the cars, piledriving unlucky passengers.

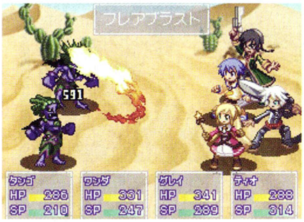
If you're searching for the worst burger in all of Japan (and possibly the world), this is the place to go. The actual product looks nothing like the picture, and we suspect that stuffed koala out front is meant to signify where Lotteria's meat comes from.

We arrived at the convention center an hour early for the first day of TGS, but that still didn't give us enough time to pick up our media badges before the show started. Imagine standing in line at Disney Land, only instead of a fun rollercoaster waiting for you at the end, there's a lanyard.

would you say to someone who's never tried a Tenchu game before?

To fans of the series, thank you for all your support! Although Tenchu 4 is very different from the previous games, there are also many familiar elements for those who played Tenchu 1 and 2. We challenge you to master the new controls and show us how quickly you can get through each stage without being caught!

For new players, we really want you to pick up the controller and start playing. You may be surprised how fun it is to sneak up on enemies and assassinate them with the motion controls. We also hope that the story and atmosphere of Tenchu 4 will draw you in and make you a true fan of the series.

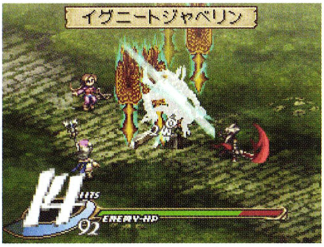


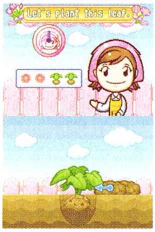
KIMINO YUSHA

This classic-style DS RPG from SNK doesn't have a ton of hype behind it, but it impressed us by augmenting its traditional gameplay with stunning good looks. The hand-drawn animation is extremely impressive, and the turn-based battles are furious fun. Your characters perform team-up attacks randomly to juggle enemies onto the upper screen and deliver powerful combos.

VALKYRIE PROFILE: TOGA O SEOUMONO

Valkyrie Profile's DS debut is a significant departure from previous games in the series. Instead of combining side-scrolling action with RPG-style battles, the DS version is a turn-based strategy game. Hard-hitting multicharacter combat is still the order of the day, however; when multiple heroes surround an enemy, you'll be able to chain their attacks together to annihilate your foe.



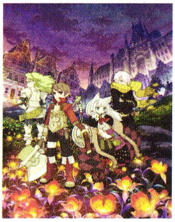


GARDENING MAMA

It turns out that Mama isn't just good at cooking—she's also an expert gardener. Although the activities are different from those in Cooking Mama, the gameplay is similar—you perform step-by-step actions on the DS's touch screen to make the greenery grow. You'll open your seed pouch, choose the best seeds, till the soil, plant the seeds, water your plants, and more.

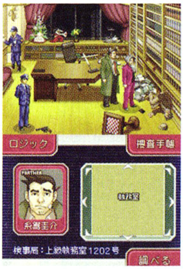
7TH DRAGON

Given that it comes from a director who worked on Etrian Odyssey and a producer who co-created Phantasy Star, it should be little surprise that 7th Dragon's sensibilities are decidedly retro. This DS RPG looks and feels like a long-lost relic of the 16-bit era, which isn't necessarily a bad thing, but the frequent random encounters, primitive battle presentation, and brutal difficulty made a less-than-stellar first impression.

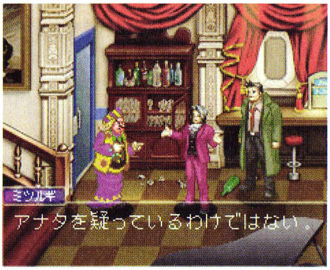


GYAKUTEN KENJI

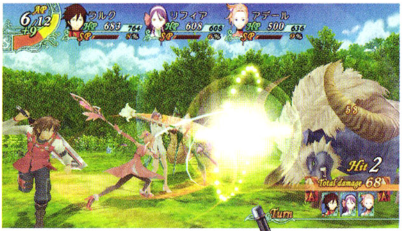
The latest title in Capcom's Ace Attorney series isn't an Ace Attorney game at all. Instead you play the role of Phoenix Wright's friend and rival, "perfect prosecutor" Miles Edgeworth, as you explore crime scenes, confront suspects, and solve crimes in Gyakuten Kenji for the DS. Unlike in the Ace Attorney games, you actually move the protagonist around the environments and find clues via a third-person view, then combine the information you discover to yield even more clues before battling criminals in verbal showdowns (which feature the series' trademark ability to yell "Hold it!" into the mic). You'll also be accompanied by partner characters, including detective Dick Gumshoe and a new ninjalike female thief (named Mikumo Ichijo in Japan), who provide advice at the press of a button. Capcom decorated the Gyakuten Kenji portion of its booth to resemble Edgeworth's office, which is the setting for the game's first level.



検事局：上級執務室1202号



アナタを疑っているわけではない。

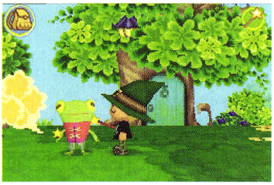


ARC RISE FANTASIA

Despite Wii's overwhelming success in its native land, there have been very few traditional Japanese RPGs on the console. Apparently ImageEpoch—the studio behind the Luminous Arc series and the upcoming World Destruction for DS—took notice, and will attempt to fill the void with Arc Rise Fantasia, due on these shores next summer. Revolving around a good old-fashioned tale of magic and dragons, the game doesn't seem to stray far from genre conventions, with the exception of its intriguing "Trinity Action Battle System." During combat, your entire party draws from the same pool of Action Points, which you expend as you see fit at the beginning of each round. You can spread points evenly among all three members of your group, for example, or just have a single combatant attack over and over. The staggering number of options available in the demo hinted at some impressive depth, and combining certain moves resulted in flashy tandem attacks. Arc Rise Fantasia also stands out as a treat for the eyes and ears, with sweeping, colorful vistas, stunning water effects, and a soundtrack helmed by famed composer Yasunori Mitsuda.

LITTLE MAGICIAN'S MAGIC ADVENTURE

If you combined Animal Crossing with Harry Potter, you'd get Little Magician's Magic Adventure, a new four-player DS game from Konami. You'll get to attend classes, go shopping, collect bugs, play music, and cast spells (including flatulence magic!?) as you grow from an apprentice magician into a Great Wizard. Look for this one to come to North America in early 2009.



IN STORES NOW!

RAYMAN RAVING RABBIDS® TV PARTY

OVER 50 HILARIOUS GAMES

RACE, SURF, AND DANCE WITH YOUR FRIENDS.

HOOK UP A Wii BALANCE BOARD TO EXPERIENCE THE FIRST VIDEO GAME YOU CAN PLAY WITH YOUR BUTT.

Wii BALANCE BOARD™ COMPATIBLE

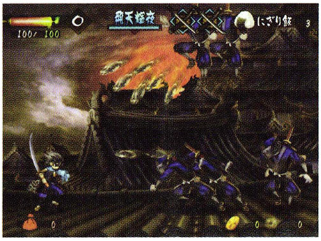
Shake it TV
Sports
EVERYONE 10+
E 10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Animated Blood
Cartoon Violence
Crude Humor
Mild Language
Wii
NINTENDO DS
UBISOFT

WWW.RABBIDS.COM

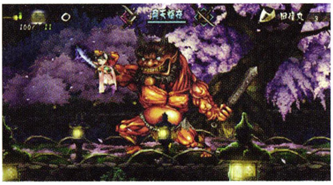
© 2008 Ubisoft Entertainment. All Rights Reserved. Rayman, Rayman Raving Rabbids, the character of Rayman, Ubisoft, Ubi.com, and the Ubisoft logo are trademarks of Ubisoft Entertainment in the U.S. and/or other countries. Wii and Nintendo DS are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo.

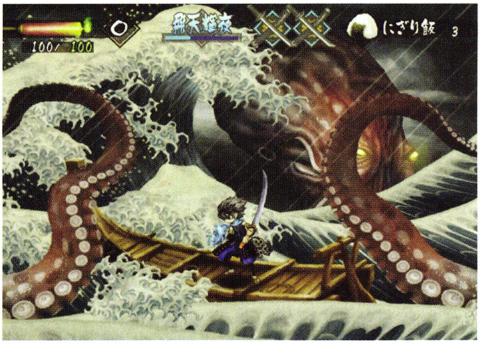
UBISOFT

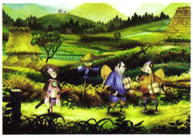
MURAMASA: THE DEMON BLADE



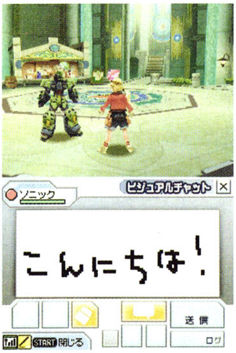
Getting to the Muramasa kiosks proved hazardous due to the large puddles of drool covering the floor. This is one beautiful game. Plus, unlike Odin Sphere (developer Vanillaware's previous hand-drawn action-RPG), what we've seen of Muramasa shows nary a hint of slowdown. The game's heroes—a male and female ninja—feel much more agile than Odin Sphere's as they bound across the screen, and many of the stages feature significant vertical elements to take advantage of that fact. Contrary to what we were told for our story in Volume 234, the game does not feature motion controls in its current state, though producer Yoshifumi Hashimoto says the team might implement some level of waggle for special moves. Hashimoto also intimated that Muramasa will have players revisit stages much less frequently than did Odin Sphere, the result of a more straightforward narrative structure that follows your journey from Kyo to Edo (ancient Kyoto and Tokyo, respectively). Our only concern thus far is that the TGS demo was shockingly easy. Hopefully it was just watered down to hurry showgoers through the entire presentation.







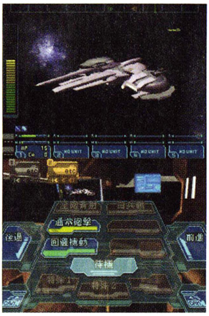
PHANTASY STAR Ø



Few third-party publishers have shown the DS as much love as Sega lately, and Phantasy Star Ø is the company's most ambitious title to date for the dual-screened handheld. The latest iteration of the venerable Phantasy Star Online series, PSØ let up to four friends quest together via Wi-Fi (for free), and boasts all-new missions, weapons, and monsters, as well as an original single-player story mode. The core, action-heavy play mechanics haven't changed much, but the DS touch screen offers a new twist on communication. Players can draw messages and share them with the rest of the team, ranging from simple written requests like "Please heal me!" to full-fledged illustrations with which to distract your squadmates while you snag that rare treasure. And since your friends probably won't appreciate you making like Bob Ross in the heat of battle, you can save up to 20 message shortcuts for quick and easy access. Sega has yet to commit to a US release for Phantasy Star Ø, but we'll keep bugging 'em.

INFINITE SPACE

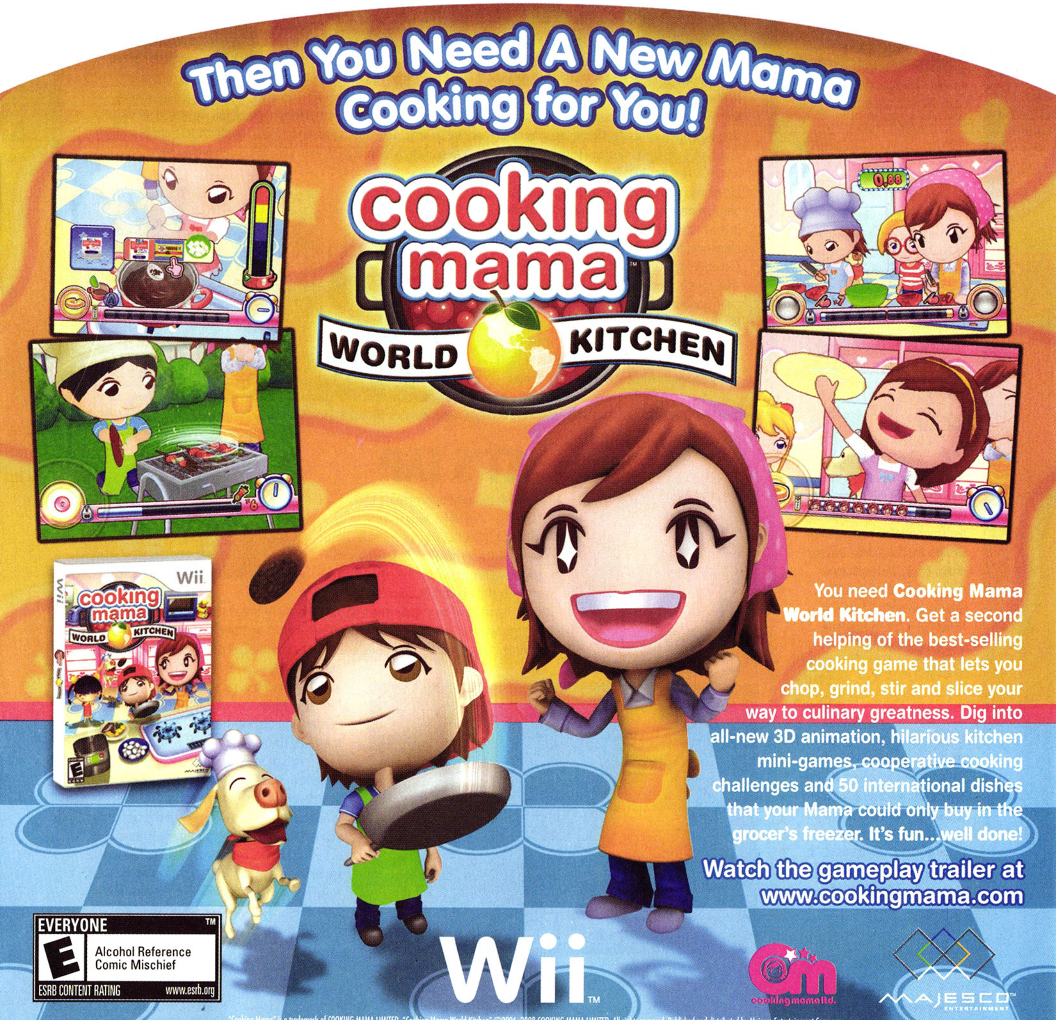
This text-heavy space opera from Sega and PlatinumGames is a bit hard to decipher in Japanese, but we were able to get the gist of it: customize your vessels, which range from agile fighters to massive capital ships, then engage the enemy in turn-based battles. The presentation is surprisingly cinematic for a DS title, and frequent cut-scenes hint at an expansive storyline. A US release date is TBD.



FRAGILE

We're not entirely convinced that Fragile is going to be a great game—the combat feels pretty simplistic and awkward at this point—but it's absolutely beautiful, the soundtrack is tremendous, and there's just something about the whole thing that charmed our pants off. Hopefully Namco Bandai will see fit to bring this Wii exclusive stateside so we can investigate further.

Does Your Mama's Chicken Pot Pie Make You Wanna Cry?


cooking mama
WORLD KITCHEN
0.88
Wii
cooking mama
WORLD KITCHEN
EVERYONE
E
Alcohol Reference
Comic Mischief
ESRB CONTENT RATING
www.esrb.org
Wii
cooking mama ltd.
MAJESCO ENTERTAINMENT

Then You Need A New Mama Cooking for You!

You need **Cooking Mama World Kitchen**. Get a second helping of the best-selling cooking game that lets you chop, grind, stir and slice your way to culinary greatness. Dig into all-new 3D animation, hilarious kitchen mini-games, cooperative cooking challenges and 50 international dishes that your Mama could only buy in the grocer's freezer. It's fun...well done!

Watch the gameplay trailer at www.cookingmama.com

"Cooking Mama" is a trademark of COOKING MAMA LIMITED. "Cooking Mama World Kitchen" ©2006, 2008 COOKING MAMA LIMITED. All rights reserved. Published and distributed by Majesco Entertainment Company.
Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. ©2006 Nintendo. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

Resident Evil: Degeneration

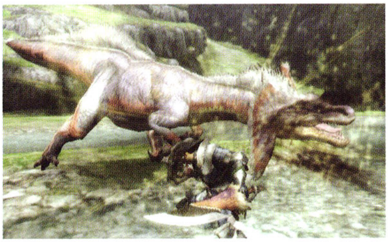
To take a break from checking out all the games at TGS, Chris and Steve attended a special press screening for Resident Evil: Degeneration, the new feature-length CG flick from Sony Pictures and Capcom. Here are their impressions:

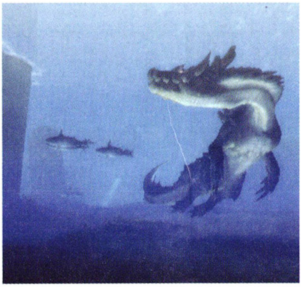
STEVE I'm a huge Resident Evil fan, so going into TGS, this movie screening was one of the things I was most looking forward to. Unfortunately, and I say this without hyperbole, Resident Evil: Degeneration is quite possibly the worst film I've ever seen.

CHRIS I actually liked it better than some of the live-action RE movies, but that isn't saying much—I considered running out of the theater several times. The CG was disappointing (not horrible, but not good enough for a feature film), and the characters really felt contrived.

STEVE Yeah, I didn't think it was possible for me to dislike Leon S. Kennedy, but this flick proved me wrong. All they had to do was push my nostalgia buttons and I would have clapped like a happy little monkey. Instead they've dragged some of my favorite video game lore into the mud. I really wish I could erase the whole thing from my memory.

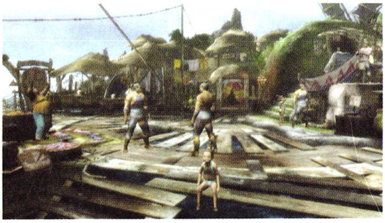
CHRIS What, you didn't like Leon's forced romance? That was the worst part for me—the failed attempts to make an emotional resonance with the characters. I guess not everything can be up to the dramatic standards of, "I hope this is not Chris's blood!" Degeneration indeed.

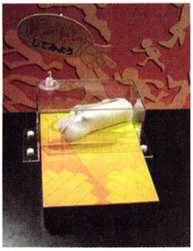




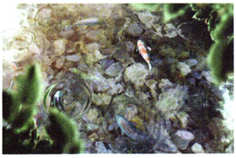
MONSTER HUNTER 3

Monster Hunter 3 was, without a doubt, the runaway success of TGS. As the latest entry in Capcom's superpopular online multiplayer monster-slaying series (as well as the series' first installment on Wii and the first console iteration in a few years), Monster Hunter 3 boasted the longest lines of the show—some players waited more than four hours to track down and defeat the game's big, tough, dinosaur-inspired beasties. Like previous chapters of the franchise, Monster Hunter 3 features plenty of customization; there were four types of weapons in the demo we played (bowguns, single-handed swords with shields, giant dual-handed swords, and massive hammers), each with distinct power, speed, and subtly different motion controls, plus you'll get to scavenge for materials with which to craft your own personalized armor. The game also offers new features, including the ability to swim underwater and battle monsters, such as a mighty leviathan, in the murky depths. Up to four players will be able to team up to go on quests online, or you can opt to play offline in solo or two-player split-screen modes. Though the game hasn't been announced formally for North America yet, producer Kenji Tsujimoto has high hopes for the game here. "In a sense, we want to take this as a chance to reintroduce the American public to what Monster Hunter is," he says.

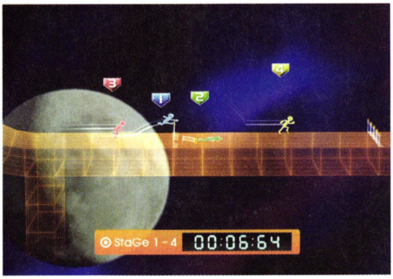




LET'S TAP

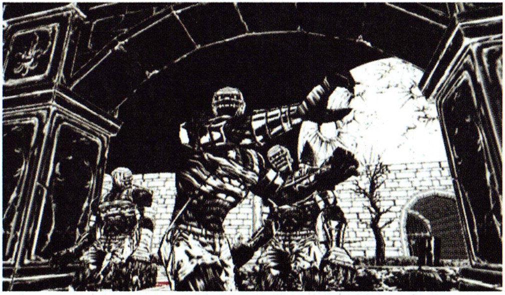


Our first thought upon seeing Let's Tap was, "Yuji Naka, why have you forsaken us?!" But upon closer inspection, we're officially intrigued. This new Wii-exclusive project from the cocreator of Sonic the Hedgehog comes with a small cardboard box upon which you set the Wii remote facedown. You then tap the box with your fingertips, and the remote picks up the vibrations. The game includes about a dozen multiplayer-focused activities, all of which take advantage of this unique control interface. Tap Runner, for instance, is a simple side-scrolling platformer in which you tap lightly to jog, and tap harder to jump over hurdles. As you progress the game throws additional obstacles at you, such as a balloon that you have to inflate by tapping in rhythm. The other mode on display at TGS—Visualizer—lets you produce different graphical effects on a variety of backgrounds; you tap to send ripples through a stream or to set off fireworks over a city skyline. The whole experience is peculiar to say the least, but Naka is known for thinking outside the box, and his efforts have been successful more often than not.



MADWORLD

Avid readers of this humble publication know that MadWorld is one of our most eagerly anticipated Wii titles. The over-the-top action game from many of the folks who brought us Viewtiful Joe and Resident Evil 4 is a study in creative carnage, allowing players to dispatch their foes in any number of hilariously ingenious ways. After months of being forced to simply watch the awesomeness unfold onscreen, we finally got a chance to dish out some punishment ourselves. The verdict? MadWorld is every bit as fun to play as it is to watch. The game mixes in just the right amount of motion controls to give it a visceral oomph. Normal attacks are executed via button presses, with waggle reserved for context-sensitive finishing moves. And stringing together different combinations is immensely (and morbidly) satisfying. At one point, I slammed a tire over some poor sap to trap his arms at his sides, then picked him up and dumped him in a flaming oil barrel before grabbing said barrel and driving it down on top of another guy. The more complex your macabre medley, the more points you earn, which unlock additional weapons, minigames, and boss battles.



The development team also showed off a brand-new level boasting greater complexity than what we had seen previously, with hero Jack navigating rooftops, climbing over construction equipment, and sliding down zip-lines. Along the way, they unveiled a number of never-before-seen attacks involving gongs, electric fences, giant turtle shells, and good old-fashioned throwing-dudes-out-of-windows. The highlight: Jack grabs an enemy and buries a trumpet where the sun don't shine, leaving the unfortunate fellow to stagger around as he inadvertently toots the horn.

Eager to learn what else his team has in store for us, we asked MadWorld producer Atsushi Inaba to share one bit of information that nobody else knows about yet regarding the game. "So far, none of the trailers that we've released have really touched on the story aspect of MadWorld," Inaba points out. "And the game does have a very in-depth story. When the time comes to show you the cut-scenes, you will most likely be very surprised. The way that you see the game may be completely turned around. The cut-scenes are very unique compared to what you're seeing during gameplay."

CHOCOBO TO MAHOU NO EHON: MAJO TO SHOUJO TO GONIN NO YUUSHA

Essentially a sequel to Final Fantasy Fables: Chocobo Tales, this DS game puts you in control of the ever-popular Chocobo as you attempt to save your pal Cid from an evil witch who's rewriting Cid's storybook. You'll play touch-screen minigames (catching falling apples and bouncing balls in the air, for instance) and journey into the storybook itself to put things right.

LITTLE KING'S STORY

We got to see more of Little King's Story at TGS, and we're pleased to say that the Pikminesque fantasy game for Wii is coming along beautifully. While we already knew about the strategic gameplay and the various jobs you could assign to your followers, we got our first glimpses at the seven other kingdoms you'll be visiting, which include a country where everything revolves around TV and a land where the king is determined by how much he can eat!

VIDEO GAME RENTALS DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR

Over 6,000 Titles • No Late Fees • Free Shipping

Wii
ROCK BAND 2
Wii
STAR WARS THE CLONE WARS
LIGHTSABER DUELS
LUCASARTS
Wii
SONIC UNLEASHED
SEGA
Wii
Animal Crossing
CITY FOLK
Nintendo

1

Pick Your Games Online

2

We Rush Them To You

3

Play Games as Long as You Want

4

Return Games and Get More From Your List

PLAYSTATION 3 Wii XBOX 360

GF GAMEFLY®

START NOW for just
$8.95
GAMEFLY
GF
FIRST-CLASS MAIL FLAT
PROCESS ON AFSM 100

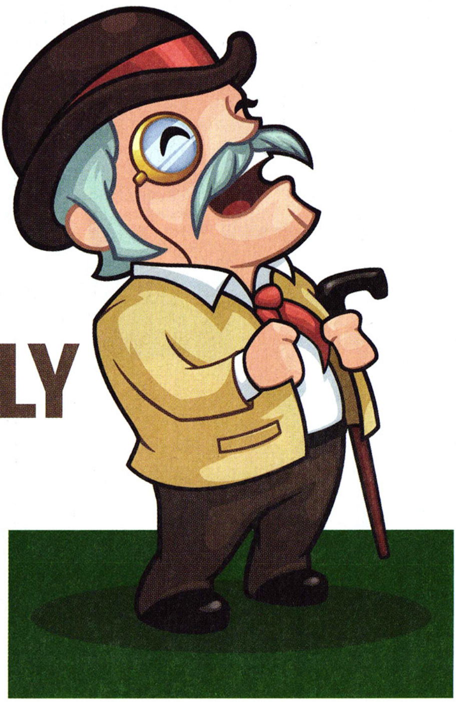
Go to: www.gamefly.com

PlayStation.2 PSP PlayStation Portable XBOX NINTENDO GAMECUBE NINTENDO DS GAME BOY ADVANCE

© 2008 GameFly, Inc. GAMEFLY and the GF Logo are trademarks of GameFly, Inc. All other marks used under license by their respective owners. Unless you cancel your account, your credit card will be charged for the price of your game plan at the end of your free trial. You must be 18 years of age or older and reside inside the 50 United States to use the GameFly service.

Puzzles, platforms, and British nobility collide in EA's curious new DS game, Henry Hatsworth in the Puzzling Adventure.

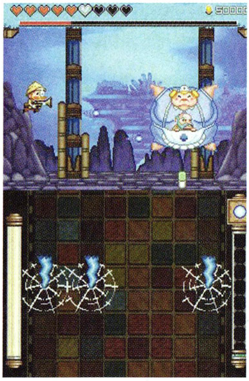
A MOST GENTLEMANLY ESCAPADE

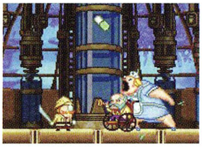


In the heart of a volcano, the jungle of the Amazon basin, and the ruins of Atlantis rest relics of extraordinary power—a bowler hat, a bowtie, loafers, pantaloons, a monocle—all pieces of the most splendid suit the world has ever known. The great tyrants of history have long fought to collect the pieces, but Henry Hatsworth of the Pompous Adventurer's Guild is the only man with the class and carriage to assemble the suit and use its impeccable style to conquer a parallel world of puzzles and treasure.

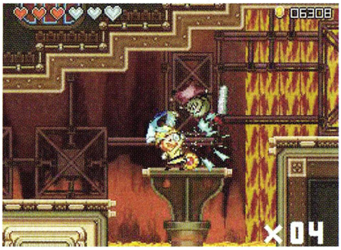
Oh, it's a story we've seen a thousand times before. "What makes Henry Hatsworth more special than all the other haberdashery-themed action-platformers starring aged Victorian gentlemen?" you may ask. The answer lies on the lower screen of the Nintendo DS, where a pile of blocks from the puzzle dimension are constantly rising toward the swashbuckling action unfolding on the screen above. You'll need to pause the ruckus on the top screen regularly to clear the blocks, Bejeweled-style, by reversing horizontal pairs to clear sets of three or more same-colored blocks.

The puzzle game intersects with the action game in peculiar and ingenious ways. Enemies defeated on the upper screen fall into the lower screen, where they must be cleared before the rising blocks push them back into Henry's way. Power-ups fall to the lower screen as well, where you can clear them to trigger their effects when needed. The bullets fired from Henry's blunderbuss grow in midair every time blocks are cleared, and combos from Henry's machete boost the strength of power-ups in the puzzle. Fill up a meter by clearing enough blocks, and Henry Hatsworth can call for tea time, where he can summon his indestructible steam-powered mech after a sip of tea and a hearty "good show!" It's all very peculiar, but a great deal of fun to play.





[Left] Henry's rivals are a right pack of nutters. The less said about this poor blighter, the better.

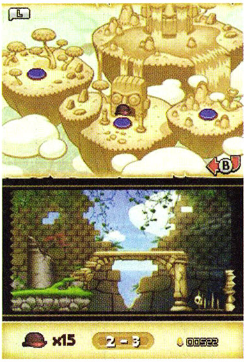


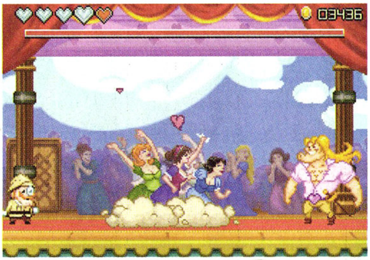
EXISTENTIALISM AND MONKEYS

Henry Hatsworth was born when creative designer Kyle Gray began exploring ways to utilize the DS's two screens in a way no one had tried before. "I had this crazy idea about existentialism in games that included monkeys, puzzle blocks, and a man with a machete." The puzzle blocks, machete, and dual-screen ideas made the cut; monkeys and existentialism did not. "Somehow, that didn't resonate as well as a squat English man spouting Britishisms," notes Gray.

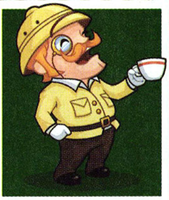
After a year spent cranking out Flash-based prototypes, Gray unveiled an early version of Henry Hatsworth at the GDC's Independent Games Summit to thundering laughter and applause. His bosses at EA Tiburon (the creators of the Madden series and several other sports franchises) were understandably eager to take a break from texturing Shawne Merriman's tattoos, and agreed to

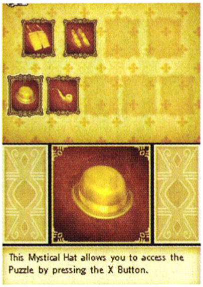
BY CASEY LOE



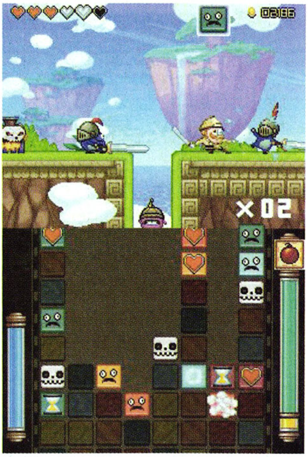


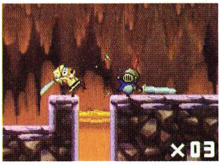
Hello, what's this? The magic suit has taken 20 years off Hatsworth's appearance!





This Mystical Hat allows you to access the Puzzle by pressing the X Button.





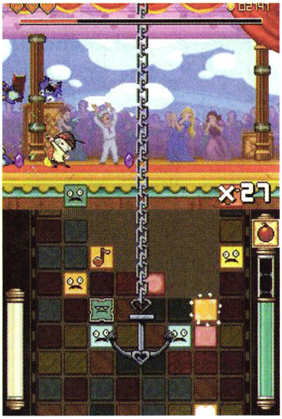
put some resources behind genteel Professor Hatsworth instead. With only a year to work and a team of seven, the puzzling adventure had to take shape quickly. "The most challenging part has just been getting everything in, given the number of people on the project," explains Gray. "When one person is out sick, you really feel the impact of their absence."

FROM UZIS TO OPERA

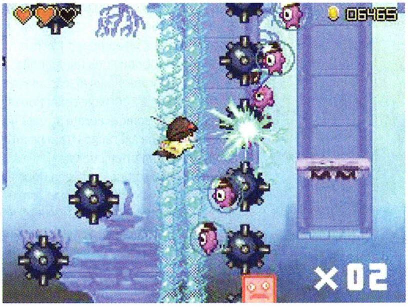
The team has done an impressive job of bringing the game's demos to life, a process that involved making a great many changes to the original prototype. "It plays a lot better for one thing," says Gray. "In the original version I had a lot of overpowered, cool attacks that would have completely destroyed the game. [Originally] Hatsworth had a jetpack and an Uzi in his powered-up state." Sadly, one of that version's most crowd-pleasing moments, in which Henry Hatsworth made his mech out of a transforming Big Ben, had to be dropped. "We knew we needed a mech sequence—it's practically a law in games these days—and for some reason Big Ben just popped in there," Gray reminisces. "For me, the Big Ben mech sequence is where the game originally got its character, but we decided to cut it in the end. Luckily, there are several other exciting sequences that still retain the feeling of the original."

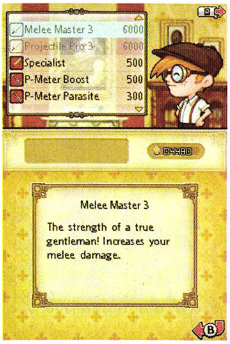
Indeed, Henry Hatsworth is full of pleasant surprises. The third boss, a handsome simpleton named Lance, battles Hatsworth by spraying the puzzle with musical notes while belting out a beautiful opera composed of meaningless Italian phrases. Henry's own voice is a nonsensical delight, with text bubbles that contain refined bon mots but a voice that is merely a series of phlegmy chortles.

If Professor Layton left any doubt in your mind, Professor Henry Hatsworth is sure to cement the Nintendo DS's reputation as *the* handheld platform for video games starring refined British gentlemen. But which professor would come out on top? "Two words: Robot Suit," says Gray, rattling off the impressive arsenal of steam-powered weapons wielded by Henry Hatsworth's tea-time mech. "If you need someone to find your missing cat, Professor Layton is your man. If you need someone to save the world from an impending collision with an alternate dimension—who you gonna call? Hatsworth."



[Left] Hatsworth's foes will attempt to use his puzzles against him. Give that anchor a good whacking, chop-chop!





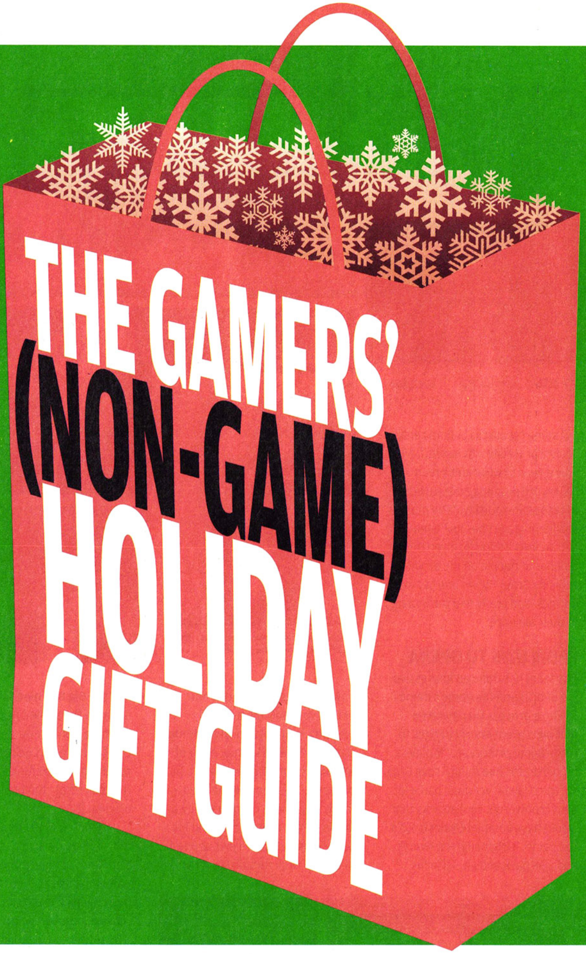
Melee Master 3	6000
Projectile Pro 3	6000
Specialist	500
P-Meter Boost	500
P-Meter Parasite	300

04480

Melee Master 3

The strength of a true gentleman! Increases your melee damage.

THE GAMERS' (NON-GAME) HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE



RIDING HIGH ON THE SUCCESS OF Wii AND DS, NINTENDO HAS MORE FANS THAN EVER. WE'VE GOT SOME IDEAS ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN GIVE THE NINTENDO MANIACS ON YOUR LIST THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.

There's more to life than playing video games, but that's not to say a fan's nongaming life has to be a Nintendo-free zone. There are plenty of ways the Nintendo faithful can wear their fandom on their sleeves (literally and figuratively). Check out our rundown of products that feature Nintendo characters or characters who appear in games available for Nintendo systems.

STREET FIGHTER
TRIBUTE
CAPCOM

大神繪草子
Official Complete Works

ART BOOKS

Few video game franchises have enjoyed the pop-culture breakout success of the Street Fighter series. The trials of Chun Li, Ryu, Ken, Blanka, and Guile have inspired movies, an animated TV series, and a lot of great artwork. Udon Entertainment has compiled the best work by professional artists and fans in *Street Fighter Tribute*, a 300-page collection of character illustrations to commemorate Street Fighter's 20th anniversary. The art ranges from beautifully rendered paintings to comic depictions.

Other collaborations between Udon and game maker Capcom include *Mega Man Zero Official Complete Works*, *Okami Official Complete Works*, and *Darkstalkers Graphic File*. The books are available through Amazon, as well as other book and comic-book retailers. For more information, visit www.udonentertainment.com.

CAPCOM
MEGA MAN ZERO
OFFICIAL COMPLETE WORKS

BY GEORGE SINFELD

MONOPOLY
Nintendo
MONOPOLY
Nintendo

BOARD GAMES

Mario made a harrowing climb to save Pauline in the original Donkey Kong title. You can relive it—and test the integrity of the structure—while playing Jenga: Donkey Kong Collector's Edition from USAOPOLY (www.usaopoly.com). The traditional Jenga blocks are adorned with a girder design to recall the classic video game. You can play the game abiding by regular Jenga rules or play a custom version that has Mario climbing to the top of the tower, where the monkey and the damsel wait.

The company also offers a Mushroom Kingdom twist on one of the most successful board games of all time. Monopoly: Nintendo Collector's Edition revisits a wealth of Nintendo titles, giving us character-themed commodities instead of the traditional properties. Mario and Luigi are, predictably, the Park Place and Boardwalk of the game. Also featured are Yoshi, Kirby, Samus Aran, Link, and Zelda. Tokens include Mario's cap, Link's iron boots, and the original NES controller. That's old-school.

Next up for USAOPOLY is a Nintendo-themed chess set. You've got one guess as to who gets to be the king.

SNOW SLED

If you prefer to experience speed firsthand, you can do no better than slide down a snow-covered hill this winter on a 24-inch-wide Snow Riderz sled, part of the Snow Nation line from Dynatech. Sporting graphics from Super Mario Galaxy, the sled may demonstrate a more realistic relationship with gravity than Mario enjoys in Galaxy, but it's no less thrilling. Visit www.tech4kids.com for more information.

SUPER MARIO GALAXY

MINI-STATUES

Though they're a bit on the pricey side (around $100 each or more), First 4 Figures' officially licensed mini-statues are collectible, classy, and cool. Sheik, from The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, is one of the company's newest releases, and Sonic the Hedgehog and Metroid's Zero Suit Samus will be out early next year. Production runs are limited, so you might want to get your preorders in now at first4figures.com.

SLOT CARS

Modeled after the vehicles in Mario Kart DS, the Mario Kart slot-car set from Carrera GO!!! pits Mario versus Wario on the Superstar course, a racetrack with an exaggerated banked curve and plenty of tight turns. The key to victory is to maintain a steady speed and not go so fast that your racer flies off the track.

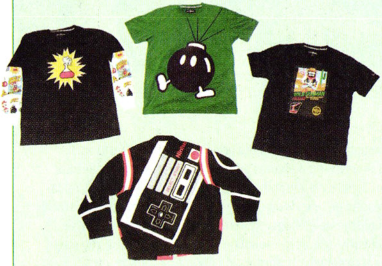
SUPER MARIO
NINTENDO DS HOLDER
6+

PLUSH TOYS AND FIGURES

Mario, a mushroom, and three classic villains lead the lineup of plush figures from Popco. Sure, a Goomba, a Boo, and a Piranha Flower can be nasty in the Super Mario Bros. games, but how bad can they be when they're so squishably soft? You can act out Mario's most dangerous encounters with the plushes, and no one has to get hurt. In addition to playing the role of enemy flattener, Mario is handheld-guardian with Popco's Super Mario Nintendo DS holder, a 14-inch-tall figure that ensures you'll always know where you left your DS.

SURFACE GRAPHICS

Here's your chance to enjoy wall-to-wall Nintendo fandom. Blik surface graphics allow you to build scenes from three beloved Nintendo games: Super Mario Bros., New Super Mario Bros., and Donkey Kong. The giant adhesive pieces include all of the elements, such as Donkey Kong's characters, girders, ladders, barrels, and fireballs. You can place them on your walls any way you see fit to create a scenario from the game. The pieces are reusable, so if you tire of one scene, you can create an all-new one. For details visit www.whatisblik.com.



CLOTHING

A visit to nearly any mall in the country will show you that there are numerous Nintendo-related clothing lines. One company, TorrelTorrel, specializes in T-shirts, jackets, and hoodies that hark back to the NES days. By visiting www.torreltorrel.com, you'll find items such as embroidered NES game pak T-shirts, a long-sleeved potion shirt (from Super Mario Bros. 2), and varsity jackets featuring Bowser and the NES controller. Nelly and Busta Rhymes have been seen modeling the company's clothing.

DS ACCESSORIES

The bigger the keychain, the less likely you are to misplace your keys, right? Basic Fun (www.basicfun.com) offers a couple of Nintendo-related keychains that are big enough to never be missed. The Nintendo DS carrying-case keychain looks like a DS and holds as many as four DS cartridges. Additionally, it comes with a DS stylus. The company's Mario Sound EFX stylus makes six different classic Super Mario sounds. You can find them at toy stores and major retailers.

Sour Candies
Super Mario Bros.
Sour Candies

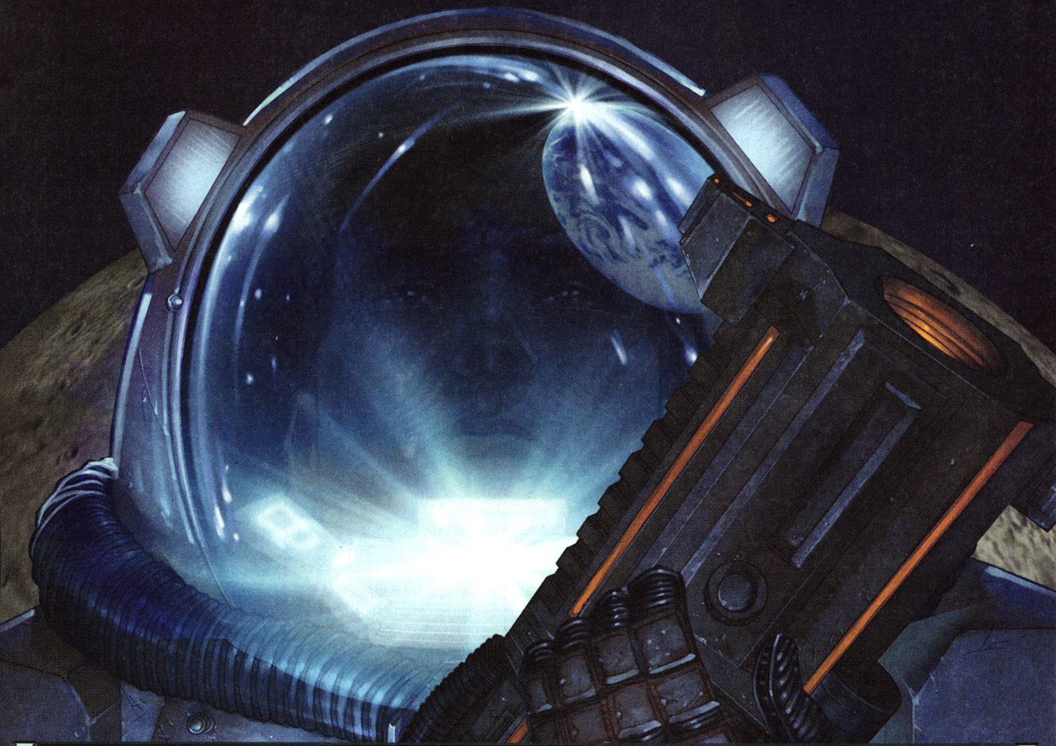
CANDY

Defeating the final boss of a Mario or Zelda title is pretty sweet. Equally sweet are Boston America's Nintendo-branded candy treats. Their New Super Mario Bros. Mushroom sour candies come in cherry, apple, and raspberry flavors, packaged in a cool collectible tin. Also available are Zelda and Nintendo Power mints, and two drinks: Power Up energy drink and Donkey Kong Jungle Juice. For details visit www.bostonamerica.com.

OWER UP
ENERGY DRINK
ONKEY KON
UNGLE JUIC

MOON

THE MOON HAS MORE THAN ONE DARK SIDE



HEALTH
55-60
SUPER ASSAULT RIFLE

HEALTH
60-60
SUPER ASSAULT RIFLE

SHIELD
100-100
LUNAR ROVER

HEALTH
4-16
LEPTON SPREAD

GameStop
power to the players™

amazon.com

TEEN
T
Drug Reference
Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

RENEGADE KID

MASTIFF

NINTENDO DS™

Copyright © Renegade Kid LLC. All Rights Reserved. Published by Mastiff. Nintendo DS is a trademark of Nintendo. © 2008 Nintendo

Final Thoughts

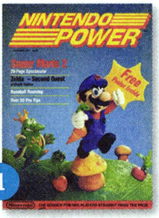
IN THIS YEARLONG series examining the history of Nintendo Power, we've looked back at everything from the magazine's covers to its contests. This month our final installment reaches out to the people who have worked so hard writing, editing, designing and producing the magazine each month to get their perspective on everything from their favorite projects to how the whole thing got started. I only regret that we don't have enough space to hear from all the people who have contributed over the years. From my perspective, it's been a privilege to work with such a talented and dedicated group, and although today's team has changed considerably from that of the first issue, it is every bit as passionate about exploring Nintendo's expanding world of fun as the pioneers who bootstrapped NP back in 1988. The next 20 years promise to be even more exciting than the first.

BY SCOTT PELLAND

GAIL TILDEN, FORMER EDITOR IN CHIEF "Nintendo Power was an outgrowth of the Nintendo Fun Club News, a free newsletter that had grown to about two million subscribers. We sent out a total of about three million copies of [NP's] first issue. The working title of the magazine was originally Power Play based on Nintendo's ad slogan "Now You're Playing with Power". But Mr. Arakawa, NOA's president, vetoed it, requiring that the word *Nintendo* be a part of the name—genius.

"I used to have the clay [Mario] model of issue #1's cover **(1)** under glass in my office—after about 10 years of moving it around, it finally crumbled beyond recognition. Another great cover was issue #2, which featured Castlevania II; Simon Belmont was a mannequin, but the blood and guts in the photo were actually real cow parts."

1



"A year ago, if someone had asked what Nintendo Power meant to me, I would have recalled how excited I was to get those first issues in the mail and how I pored over articles for games like Super Mario Bros. 3 and Castlevania II. Back in those days, I could never have imagined the Nintendo Power memories I'd be adding 20 years later, such as joining the incredible NP team and celebrating the magazine's 20th Anniversary in New York with thousands of fans. For countless readers, Nintendo Power has never been just a magazine, and that's certainly true for me."

CHRIS SLATE, EDITOR IN CHIEF

CANDACE CUNNINGHAM, COPY EDITOR "My most vivid memories of childhood frustration come from Kid Icarus, and some of my fondest memories come from success in its final stage. Ultimately that success was thanks to the maps in an early NP strategy guide. When I was nine years old, I never would have imagined that I'd someday work for Nintendo Power, and that I would have met some of my best friends working here."

2

player's pulse

Pardon us if Player's Pulse is sloppy—we're still trying to decide what to call this year. Sure, '99 just rolls of the tongue, but '00? What the heck do you call that? Double-O? All zeroes? Nada? Aught? To be honest, as long as we can stop calling it Y2K, we'll be happy.

Some Wicked Ideas

I think there should be a game for the N64 where you can create your own monster. Not cute ones—they'd be realistic like Dracula. And then you could send them out to terrorize villages and towns and neat stuff like that.

Sparky
Via the Internet

In regards to your question about what monsters would be neat in an N64 game, I think it would be cool to see a game with ancient Roman Mythology monsters.

Charley Moore
Kenilworth, IL

NATE BIHLDORFF, FORMER NP WRITER "Being a Nintendo nerd, the games always kept work at NP fun. Once I got shifted over to doing Player's Pulse, **(2)** though, it became my favorite part of each issue. I'd open hundreds of pieces of mail from kids all over the world—envelopes covered in startlingly well-done murals, many containing moving stories of kids connecting to the same characters and stories I did once upon a time. It was a constant reminder of the childlike wonder that Nintendo games awaken in people of all ages, and it always brought a smile to my face."

"Though I go pretty far back with the magazine (starting with the beheaded-Dracula-cover issue that touted Castlevania II: Simon's Quest), my most rewarding NP experience took place in the last few years, when we redesigned every section, cover to cover. My involvement was mainly in helping to set the tone for the Reviews section, and I'm really proud of how we've managed to serve our readers in that area. It's always the first place I go to on the walk back from the mailbox."

GEORGE SINFIELD, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

PIKMIN

Nice To Meet You!

THEY'RE LEAN, MEAN, LEAFY FIGHTIN' MACHINES! THE PIKMIN HAVE FINALLY SPROUTED UP ON NINTENDO GAMECUBE, AND ARMIES OF THE PLUCKY DRONES ARE RARIN' TO BATTLE GIANT BEASTS, BLOW STUFF UP, SNAG ITEMS . . . AND PICK FLOWERS. THIS DEFINITELY ISN'T YOUR GARDEN-VARIETY ACTION GAME.

SHIPWRECKED!

30 DAYS AND 30 PARTS

THE IMPACT SITE

THE ONION

FIRST CONTACT

THE MAIN ENGINE

3

OLIVER CROWELL, FORMER V-DESIGN MANAGER/DESIGNER "A highlight of working for Nintendo Power was being one of the first people to get their hands on a new Miyamoto game. Our company handled strategy content for the magazine, so with any upcoming game there were no Player's Guides or Internet resources to turn to for help. We relied on pure gameplay to collect every Shine Sprite in Super Mario Sunshine or for a speed run through Pikmin **(3)**. With a Miyamoto game it was always challenging, a bit emotional, and in the end extremely rewarding."

OF NINTENDO POWER

#12 IN OUR YEARLONG CELEBRATION OF NINTENDO POWER'S CLASSIC MOMENTS

Dinner: Galician-Style Octopus

Desert: Chocolate Cake

Hosting: Serving with Style

Food for Thought

RECIPE FOR DISASTER!

4

REBEKAH LANE, DESIGNER "I feel lucky to have been a designer on Nintendo Power for the past eight years. My favorite article to work on so far has been "Now You're Cooking with Power" **(4)** in Volume 215. Spending a day shopping for strange props and another in a photo-studio kitchen with my coworkers was one of the most entertaining experiences I've had with the magazine. (And who wouldn't enjoy the opportunity to put an octopus on Hoffman's head?) It continues to be a chance to be creative and have fun in the ever-evolving world of gaming."

"I remember reading Nintendo Power way back in elementary school—it was my first video game magazine, and I was ecstatic that there was a publication like NP that kept me informed about the latest Nintendo games. Decades later, I finally got the opportunity to work on NP, and it's been fantastic. Not only do I get to play and write about video games for a living, but I also feel sense of pride when I tell someone I work on Nintendo Power, because it makes me feel like part of something great."

JUSTIN CHENG, ASSOCIATE EDITOR

"My fondest memory of working at NP occurred in October 2006 when I got to see The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess in its near-final form. I thought it looked amazing, but I sure was glad I didn't have the awesome responsibility of writing the Player's Guide. The next day I was assigned to co-author the Player's Guide. I was in the office past midnight every day for the next two weeks (I also interviewed Zelda producer Eiji Aonuma for the Vol. 211 cover feature and was working on a Phoenix Wright article simultaneously) and grew a full beard in the process, but it was awfully fun."

CHRIS HOFFMAN, SENIOR EDITOR

HYRULE HOT SPOTS

Kakariko Village

Ordon Village

Archery Challenge

Aim high and win big in Hyrule's minigames.

Lake Hylia and Zora's Domain

Fruit Pop Flight Challenge

Falbi's Flight-by-Fowl

Iza's Rapid Ride

EMILY CROWELL, FORMER V-DESIGN DESIGNER "One of my favorite times working at Nintendo was when Twilight Princess was coming out. I was working on the strategy guide, which meant grueling hours of gameplay to figure out all its secrets, then creating many pages of layout. But it was worth it as this was during the time when the Wii was first coming out, so I was also asked to help with the online videos that were being made to promote the Wii. I got a huge thrill out of being introduced as the resident Zelda master and having my photo taken for related NP articles."

FRANCES WALL JHA, NOA LICENSING MANAGER "At Nintendo Power's heart is a deep and abiding love for Nintendo. That passion is reflected in the magazine's readers, and of course in the writers, editors, and designers who make every issue of Nintendo Power so much fun to read. Since I started working with Nintendo Power a year ago, the magazine staff has made me feel truly welcome, and I'm proud of the small ways I've been able to help them put out a better magazine. Congratulations to everyone involved in the first 20 amazing years of Nintendo Power, and here's to many more!"

20TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!

NINTENDO POWER

FREE POSTER INSIDE!

OUR BEST ISSUE OF THE YEAR!

- Our Top 20 Games For Each Nintendo System
- Exclusive Looks at 9 Major New Wii & DS Games, including: MADWORLD • MEGA MAN 9 • WII CASTLEVANIA • SONIC UNLEASHED

"I've always enjoyed reading video game magazines nearly as much as playing the games themselves. When I was a kid growing up in a small town, going to the grocery store and spending my hard-earned allowance on a new mag was the highlight of my week. That I now work at one of those magazines and have the opportunity to share my opinions with our readers is something I consider an honor and a privilege. Without you, 20 years of Nintendo Power would never have been possible. That being said, you're still not off the hook for the lackluster sales of NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams."

STEVE THOMASON, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

"Why I was excited to join Nintendo Power could actually be summed up with one image: occasionally while playing Wii Sports, I would see a screen of a Wii controller set on a table under an open window, its curtains blowing in a breeze, with the words "Why not take a Break?..." The existence of this screen seems very telling to me. What other company would gently suggest I stop playing their game? I wanted to be a part of something that seemed to care so much about its creations that it would spend a lot of time and energy adding such playful yet thoughtful details. Here I am!"

CHRIS IMLAY, ART DIRECTOR

21

Power Profiles

DATE OF BIRTH
August 11, 1965

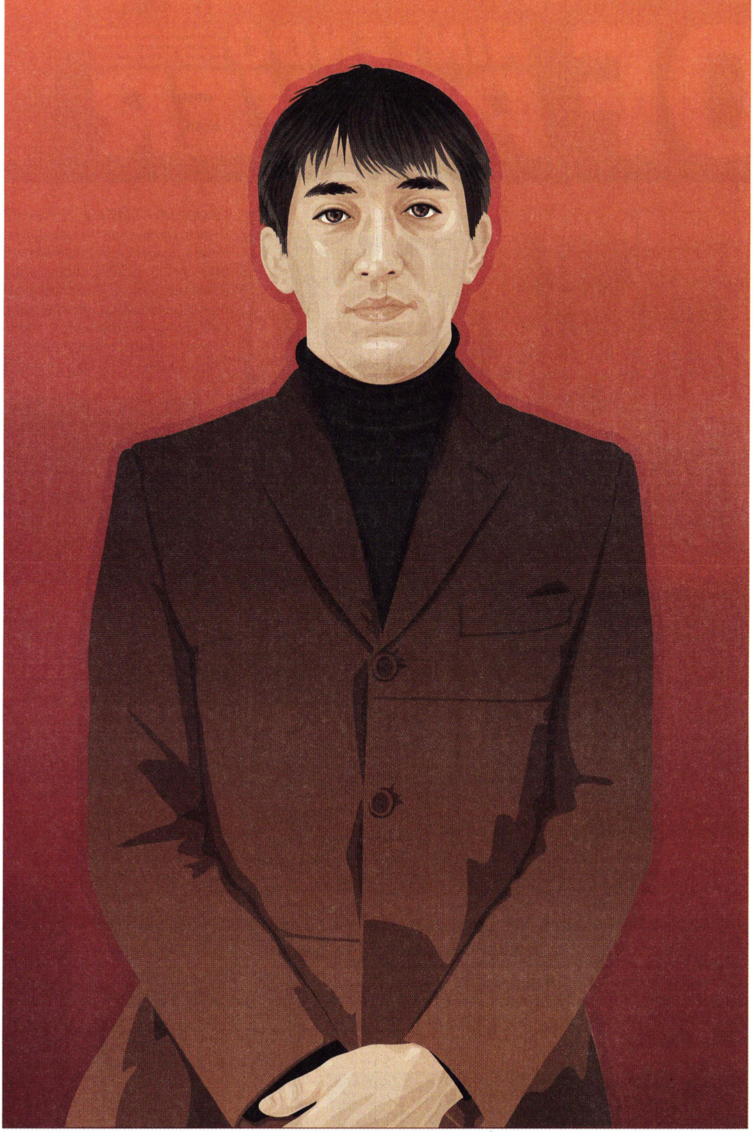
BIRTHPLACE
Yamaguchi Prefecture, Japan

POSITION
Independent game designer

BEST KNOWN FOR
Creating the survival-horror genre, making us pee our pants

FAVORITE FOOD
Kaiten sushi

CURRENT PROJECTS
Unannounced titles for PlantinumGames and Electronic Arts



Shinji Mikami

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTINA EMPEDOCLES

Video games have always had the ability to excite us, thrill us, and entertain us, but not until Resident Evil did they manage to truly scare us. The man responsible for that watershed moment is Shinji Mikami. And while he continued to make our hearts skip a beat with subsequent installments of Resident Evil over the years, this prolific director and producer has also had a hand in such hits as Devil May Cry, Dino Crisis, and Viewtiful Joe. With a personality as big as his talent, Mikami once famously warned gamers, "don't pee your pants" prior to unveiling a new trailer for Resident Evil 4. That particular masterpiece went on to be named Nintendo Power's all-time favorite GameCube title and our second favorite game *ever*. After 17 years with Capcom, Mikami recently struck out on his own as an independent game designer. He's currently helming a new project at PlatinumGames as well as reuniting with Killer 7 collaborator Goichi Suda (aka Suda51) on a title for Electronic Arts. We await both games with a fresh pair of trousers.

NINTENDO POWER **How did you first get into the video game business?**

SHINJI MIKAMI I took the entrance examination to join Capcom. I failed the test and wasn't offered a position; however, a week later I got a job offer from them. It was like joining the company as a zombie. I died once, but still kept on living.

When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be an F1 driver. When I was in elementary school, I loved Niki Lauda, who was a driver for Ferrari.

How has the industry changed since you started, and how have you changed as a creator during that time?

When I joined the industry in 1990, it was an industry where anything was possible based upon the strength of your ideas. Since large amounts of financial capital have become necessary, the balance has tipped toward return on investment via extensive use of marketing and acquiring larger numbers of users. Because of this, I feel that the number of games made as creative challenges has decreased. I wish the market had more of an adventurous spirit. As a creator, my desire to challenge myself by making interesting things hasn't changed a bit.

You seemed to be a pretty influential figure at Capcom. We realize this may be a sensitive subject, but can you talk a little bit about what prompted you to leave the company and work with PlatinumGames?

I feel that Capcom's game development is amazing. Yet, as a publicly traded company, they have to put profits first, thus fostering the titles they work hard to create tends to become the victim. Putting profits first is something every company does, so I don't feel that is a bad thing. However, personally speaking, I feel our ways of thinking are different. My work with PlatinumGames stems from my desire to work with my many friends there—fun, talented people brimming with creative spirit.

What aspect of creating a video game do you enjoy the most?

I like the fact that there is a different set of difficulties and sense of enjoyment every time. That is why I can't enjoy [regular] office work.

The original Resident Evil essentially gave birth to the modern survival-horror genre. How did the idea for the game come about, and what was the inspiration for incorporating survival elements?

I thought it would be great to have a horror game where you couldn't just turn around and run away, but had to face off against the enemies with a gun. Even when a movie is scary, there is nothing the viewer can do about it. But in a game, you can stare down certain death by just picking up a controller. You live or die based upon your own decisions and methods. That is the survival element of Resident Evil.

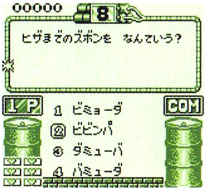
Over the course of your career, you've worked in many different roles, from director to executive producer. Which is your favorite and why?

Directing is my favorite. It is the easiest way to be in control of a game's development. Teaming up with other developers and going about making

> *"I feel that the number of games being made as creative challenges has decreased. I wish the market had more of an adventurous spirit."*

GAMEOGRAPHY

Mikami's early work included an obscure Game Boy quiz title and a handful of licensed Disney games. Not quite what you would expect from the man who later made flesh-eating zombies a video game staple.



ヒザまでのズボンを　なんていう？

1 ビミョーダ

② ビビンバ

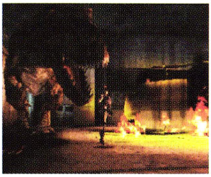
3 ダミューバ

4 バミューダ

HATENA HATENA NO DAIBOUKEN
1990, GAME BOY
PLANNER

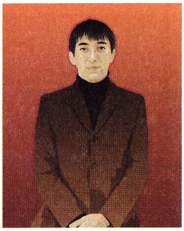
GOOF TROOP
1994, SUPER NES
GAME DESIGN

RESIDENT EVIL
1996, PLAYSTATION
DIRECTOR



DINO CRISIS
1999, PLAYSTATION
DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

Power Profiles



a game can be draining, but it is even more fun. In my case, when I had the title executive producer, I wasn't creating the game ideas or working to make them a reality. I left it all up to the developers. I'd often ask them to take my name out of the credits in these cases, but they almost always refused.

Both Resident Evil 2 and Resident Evil 4 famously went through major overhauls during development. Many developers would be reluctant to make such sweeping changes, but those games are now considered classics. What prompted you to basically start from scratch with each title, and was it difficult convincing the people around you that it was the right decision?

You remake a game because it is simply not fun. There is no need to remake something that is fun. Redoing a game increases the development cost as well as the risk. You have to redo all the promotional work, and push back the release date. It is also hard on the development staff, from a work perspective and a mental perspective. However, there is absolutely no way we can betray the expectations of users who are paying money and playing our games. Those around me were obviously not happy, but they understood my reasons.

Of course, the real intent should be to avoid remaking something entirely. Yet there are lots of things you don't know until you try them and see how they work. What is vital is figuring out what you know for sure and what you won't know until you try.

The main cause behind restarting Resident Evil 2 and Resident Evil 4 were essentially the same. Both titles were helmed by first-time directors. They both did not have enough experience when they took the reins. However, I feel it is important to give people a chance and help them grow. A lack of experience will obviously lead to mistakes, and there is only so much you can fix for someone. If I were to fix everything for them, it would end up being my game. I suppose that I didn't have to use Resident Evil to help them grow, though.

Of all the games you've worked on, which is your favorite?

Now it is Resident Evil 4, but it used to be Goof Troop for the Super Nintendo.

You were a staunch supporter of the GameCube. What attracted you to that platform, and why were you so insistent on providing it with exclusives?

First of all, I think it was a very easy platform to make games for. Another reason was that I felt that the Japanese games industry was in a crisis. I thought that I could sprout a new market based within the existing Nintendo market. It is a hard reason to understand, and that might mean that I made a mistake in adopting that platform.

Moving forward, what types of games are you most interested in making?

I want to make a game that isn't overly confined by existing boundaries. I'd like to try my hand at a variety of genres. I'd also like to try making something small based solely upon an idea, as opposed to making only huge productions.

What other games or game creators do you most admire or respect, and why?

I really love the game Family Circuit for the Famicom. The stoicism, the lack of collision on the other cars—these factors brought out a new kind of nervous tension that was very real. I think the fact the developers put everything they had into it is truly admirable. The combination of that dedication and their understanding of games is something that I value and respect.

What would be your plan for survival in the event of a real zombie apocalypse?

I'd build a shelter in a basement, store food, train, and secure information along with my family.

What is your favorite hobby or pastime?

My favorite hobby is watches. I am incredibly interested in them, and recently I bought a kit to try and build my own watch. I'm going to try and put it together whenever I find the chance between work.

If you could have one superpower, what would it be and why?

I'd like to be able to return to being 20 years old, but keep all my experiences. Knowing the future would be nice but then you'd also know everything bad that was going to happen, so it might not be all it's cracked up to be.

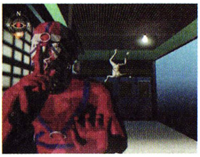
> *"There is absolutely no way we can betray the expectations of our users who are paying money and playing our games."*

GAMEOGRAPHY

RESIDENT EVIL 3: NEMESIS
1990, PLAYSTATION
PRODUCER

DEVIL MAY CRY
2001, PLAYSTATION 2
PRODUCER

RESIDENT EVIL 4
2005,GAMECUBE
DIRECTOR



KILLER 7
2005, GAMECUBE
PRODUCER

PHOENIX HORNTOADS
PHO
NTC WEST
RUN OFFENSE
PASS THROW
RECEIVE
RUN DEFENSE
PASS DEFENSE
HELMET
UNIFORM1
UNIFORM2
STRIPE1
STRIPE2
CANCEL
O K
PIT 00 08 08
CLE 00 00 00
TIME OUT
2ND & 9 YARD 00:00
NICE TACKLE BONUS 2
PHO 00 00
PIT 00 00
1ST & 10 YARD 02:52
1 T.ARACIL 85 K.SCHULZ
SNAP
DAL 06 06
GB 00 00
1ST & 10 YARD 02:19
TOUCHDOWN !
TOUCHDOWN

Go Long...

...Real Long!

Hut! Hut! Hut!...Hike! It's back!

- *Full Customization of Teams!*
- *Wi-Fi and Wireless Play!*
- *Optional Stylus Control!*
- *Super Abilities!*
- *32 Teams to Choose From!*
- *Customizable Playbook!*

ign.com BEST OF E3 2008 WINNER

Best Sports Game
Nintendo DS™

"Fast-playing and addictive..." **GameSpot.com***

TECMO BOWL® KICKOFF

www.tecmobowlgame.com

EVERYONE
E
Visit www.esrb.org for rating information
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

nintendo Wi-Fi connection

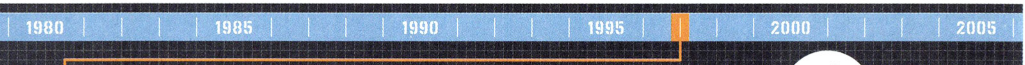
NINTENDO DS™

POP WARNER FOOTBALL

TECMO®

Polygon Magic

Tecmo Bowl®: Kickoff © 2008 Tecmo, LTD. Tecmo Bowl and Tecmo are registered trademarks of Tecmo, LTD. Nintendo DS is a trademark of Nintendo. ©2006 Nintendo. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. *5/08

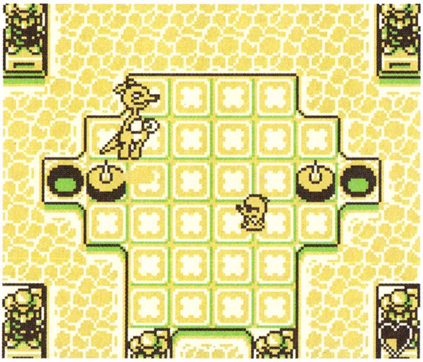


MOLE MANIA

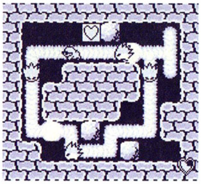
The underground movement begins here. Vive la Muddy!

Nintendo
GAME BOY
MOLE MANIA
YOU'LL DIG MOLE MANIA!

PLATFORM: GAME BOY
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY 1997
COVERED IN ISSUES: 93, 97, 101, 102
NUMBER OF TERRIBLE "DIG" PUNS ON THE BOX: 2

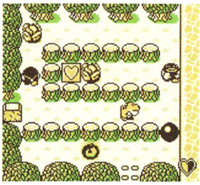


So Jinbe has a problem with moles, but he'll happily let kangaroos roam his property?



Sure, everyone knows who Mario and Link are, but Nintendo has its share of lesser-known heroes as well. How many people, for example, recall Stanley, the exterminator hero of Donkey Kong 3? Or what of Bubbles, the aquatic hero in Clu Clu Land? Hovering somewhere near the top of Nintendo's "Who?" list is Muddy Mole, hero of the oft-forgotten Game Boy game Mole Mania.

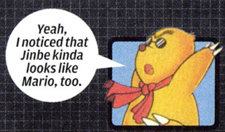
Muddy's adventure begins when he returns home one day to discover that his wife and children have been mole-napped by the evil farmer Jinbe. Ever the considerate villain, Jinbe leaves Muddy a note informing the garden pest that he can reclaim his family by journeying through "Jinbe Land."



Each of the game's eight stages is set up much like the dungeons in the 2-D Zelda titles, complete with collectible items that provide a map of the level and the location of the boss. The stages consist of a series of interconnected rooms, each containing enemies and puzzles to get past. Many of the puzzles involve knocking down a stone door with a cannonball by using Muddy's ability to grab and toss objects.

Other puzzles rely on Muddy's digging skills, which allow him to burrow underground. Moving between the above- and below-ground sections of each screen is often critical to Muddy's success. Just don't dig up the ground *too* much—you may find that an errant hole prevents a rolling cannonball from reaching its proper target (don't worry, though; you can easily reset the screen and try again).

Mole Mania was produced by Shigeru Miyamoto and features illustration work by Yoichi Kotabe, the man behind much of the early Super Mario artwork. With such talent involved with the title, it's a shame so few people have played it. Perhaps gamers didn't want to take a chance on a game that lacked a big name, or maybe the Game Boy Pocket, which debuted around the same time, overshadowed Mole Mania's release. Whatever the case, Muddy deserves a second chance. The DS's dual screens *would* be great for showing off the two-tier levels. —**PHIL T.**

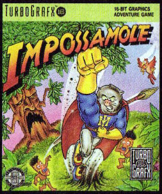

Yeah, I noticed that Jinbe kinda looks like Mario, too.

MOLE MEN

Muddy may not have made it big, but there have been plenty of famous moles in gaming. Here are a few of our favorites.

MONTY MOLE
This pest pops up at the least opportune times to thwart Mario and Luigi's advances.

BOTTLES
In Banjo-Kazooie, this short-sighted mole taught new moves to the titular heroes.



IMPOSSAMOLE
A mild-mannered mole fought evil as the superhero Impossamole. Maybe this TurboGrafx title will reach the Virtual Console someday.

MS. PAC-MAN
Like Marilyn Monroe before her, Ms. Pac-Man proved that a well-placed beauty mark looks great.

HAVE A FAVORITE CLASSIC GAME YOU'D LIKE TO SEE REVISITED?
Send us your requests—we'll consider them for a future installment of Playback. **nintendopower@futureus.com**

FROM A LEADER IN GAME DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

GET THE ULTIMATE SUMMER EXPERIENCE

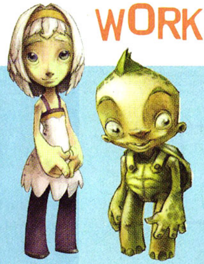
DIGIPEN ProjectFUN WORKSHOPS

DigiPen Institute of Technology, recognized by the industry as a premier game development college, presents a two-week summer workshop series designed to introduce participants of all experience levels to the fundamentals of *game programming, 3D computer animation, game design* and *robotics*.

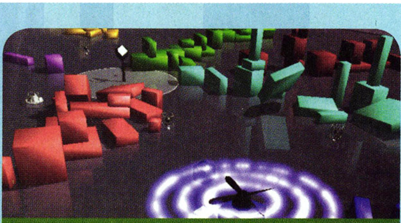
- **Get an opportunity to tour portions of Nintendo of America**
- **Awesome after-school activites with game tournaments and guest industry speakers**
- **Explore the Developers Gallery where many local game companies will be showcased**

Find out more or sign-up for an online information session at

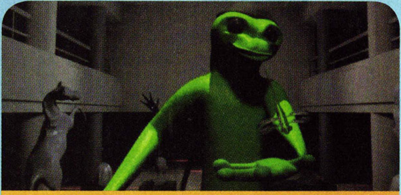
WORKSHOPS.DIGIPEN.EDU



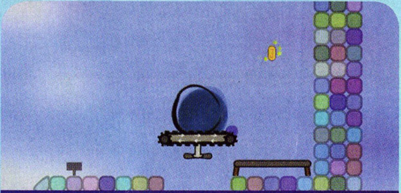
DigiPen
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
5001 150th Ave NE, Redmond, WA 98052
(866) 478-5236 • ***www.digipen.edu***



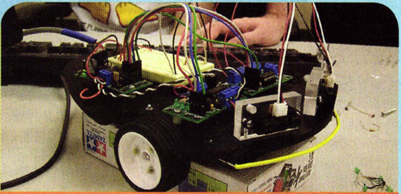
GAME PROGRAMMING



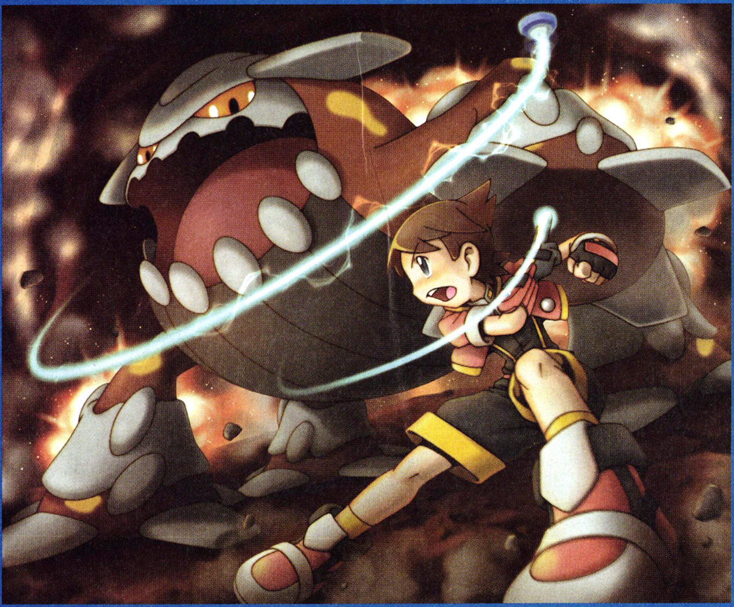
3D ANIMATION



GAME DESIGN



ROBOTICS



WIN AND SPIN!

POKÉMON RANGER: SHADOWS OF ALMIA

Wi-Fi
NINTENDO DS
Pokémon
RANGER
SHADOWS OF ALMIA
E
Nintendo

GRAND PRIZE

1 WINNER!

This month's Grand Prize winner needs nothing but great luck to receive one action-packed copy of Pokémon™ Ranger: Shadows of Almia and a brand-new Nintendo DS™ game system! But you'll need stamina and skill if you hope to become a Top Ranger and save Almia with the power of Pokémon!

SECOND PRIZE

10 WINNERS!

Our 10 runners-up will dive into the world of Pokémon Ranger with their own copies of Pokémon Ranger: Shadows of Almia. Will they have the stuff to stop Team Dim Sun or will they be lost in the shadows of defeat?

TO ENTER: Send us a postcard listing your full name, mailing address, phone number, and email address (if you have one). Address it as follows:

Nintendo Power Sweepstakes V. 236
c/o Future US
1000 Marina Blvd., STE 510
Brisbane, CA 94005

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Comic Mischief
Mild Cartoon Violence

OFFICIAL RULES

1. **NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. A PURCHASE WILL NOT IMPROVE YOUR CHANCES OF WINNING.** The sponsor of this contest is Future US, Inc., 1000 Marina Blvd., STE 510 Brisbane, CA 94005 ("Sponsor").

2. ELIGIBILITY: Sweepstakes open to legal residents of the United States (excluding residents of Rhode Island and Puerto Rico). Void where prohibited by law. Entrants must be at least 13 years of age. If a winner is a minor, the prize will be awarded in the name of the winner's parent or legal guardian, who is solely responsible for all applicable federal, state and local taxes, and that winner must also provide a signed parental or guardian consent form, provided by the sponsor, within 7 days of notification attempt. Failure of the minor to return the guardian consent form will result in the forfeiture of the prize and selection of an alternate winner, who will be chosen through a random drawing from the remaining eligible entries. Employees of Sponsor and employees' household or immediate family members are NOT eligible to enter Sweepstakes.

3. TIMING: Sweepstakes begins at 12:01 a.m. PDT on November 8th, 2008 and continues until 11:59 p.m. PDT on February 1, 2009. Mailed entries must be postmarked by 11:59 p.m. PDT on February 1, 2009 to be eligible. Incomplete or late entries will not be accepted.

4. HOW TO ENTER: A contestant may enter by printing their name, address, daytime telephone number and e-mail address (if they have one) and the name of the prize drawing on a 3x5 card and mailing it to: Nintendo Power Sweepstakes Vol. 236, c/o Future US, 1000 Marina Blvd., STE 510 Brisbane, CA 94005. Only one entry per person will be accepted. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or incomplete entries.

5. PRIZES AND ODDS: One Grand Prize will be awarded. The Grand Prize will include 1 (one) Nintendo DS™, and 1 (one) copy of Pokémon™ Ranger: Shadows of Almia for the Nintendo DS™. The Grand Prize has an estimated total retail value of $159.98. Ten (10) second place winners will each receive 1 (one) copy of Pokémon Ranger: Shadows of Almia for the Nintendo DS, with a retail value of $29.99. Odds of winning shall be determined by the number of eligible entries received. Prizes are nontransferable and must be accepted as awarded. Winner will be responsible for all taxes (federal, state, and local) and all expenses not listed herein related to acceptance and use of any prize.

6. DRAWING: Winners will be determined by a single random drawing of all valid entries held on or about February 10, 2009. The decision of Sponsors shall be final and binding and within their sole discretion. Winners will be notified by phone or email within ten (10) days of the drawing. You may obtain the name of the winner, within six months of the drawing, by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the address above (residents of Vermont may omit return postage). Sponsor reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to cancel or suspend this drawing should causes beyond its control corrupt the administration, security, or proper play of the drawing.

7. PRIVACY POLICY: Submissions are subject to standard privacy policy, the terms of which can be found at http://www.futureus.com/privacy.php, which terms and conditions entrants accept and agree to by submission of entries pursuant to these official rules.

8. AFFIDAVIT: The winners will be required to sign an affidavit of eligibility/release of liability/prize acceptance within seven days of receipt; failure to do so upon request will result in forfeiture of the prize. By acceptance of the prize, the winners agree to the use of their name and/or likeness for purposes of advertising, trade, or promotion without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. Winners are responsible for paying any income taxes on the value of the prize received. Return of any prize or prize notification as undeliverable will result in disqualification and an alternate winner will be selected.

9. RELEASE: Sponsor is not responsible for any damages or expenses that winners might incur as a result of this contest or the receipt of any prize. In addition, contestants release and hold Sponsor and its employees harmless from any and all damages and claims of any kind in connection with the contest. Sponsor reserves the right to confirm all winners for eligibility and compliance with the rules and regulations.

10. LAW: This sweepstakes is governed by the laws of the United States and is subject to all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Void where prohibited or restricted. All issues and questions concerning the construction, validity, interpretation, and enforceability of these Official Rules, or the rights and obligations of entrants or Sponsor in connection with any drawing or award, shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with the laws of, the State of California, without regard to conflict of law principles. Any cause of action by you with respect to the offer (and/or any information, products or services related thereto) must be instituted within one (1) year after the cause of action arose or be forever waived and barred. All actions shall be subject to the limitations set forth in above. All legal proceedings arising out of or in connection with the offer of these official rules shall be brought solely in San Mateo County, California. You expressly submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of said courts and consent to extraterritorial service of process.

YOU FOUND THE OCARINA!

Sweet Potato Ocarina $39.95
5 holes (octave +1), includes Songbook I/Tutorial/Songs from the Game

Extended Range Sweet Potato $49.95
6 holes (octave + 4), includes Extended Range Songbook plus Songbook I/Tutorial/Songs from the Game

Extended Range Sweet Potato XL $59.95
Bigger and deeper sounding!

Raku Pendant Ocarina
(with necklace and songbook) $24.95

Eagle Bone Flute $29.95
(cast in porcelin, simple to play, w/ necklace and playing instruction)

Silk Carrying Case
padded w/ zipper, handle and embroidered dragons
Fits all ocarinas $5.95

Ocarina Enchantment CD $9.95
Available for download only from our website

Wishbone Flute $29.95
Musical wishes bring
horse tail swishes!
Express your elf!
5" long Songbook included.

Extra Ocarina Songbooks - $2.95 ea
Songbook II, Christmas Carols,
Beatles for Extended Range

SHIPPING INFO
Shipping & Handling $6 (2-3 weeks for delivery)
PRIORITY Shipping $12 (2-7 biz days for delivery)
We ship via US Postal Service

**Order via our Website or call Toll Free!
1-866-899-4046**

- Easy To Play
- Ceramic Flute
- Songbook/Tutorial Included
- Minuets, Serenades, Requiems
- Handmade in U.S.A.

Songbird Ocarinas

2751 East 11th St. Los Angeles, CA 90023
www.songbirdocarina.com

Songbird Ocarina's not affiliated or endorsed by Nintendo of America, Inc.

Exclusively for
NINTENDO DS
SHONEN JUMP
NARUTO
PATH OF THE NINJA 2
Who will make it onto your squad?
Join Naruto and 30 Characters on an All-New Mission!
CRASH!
CRASH!
Use Exciting New Squad Leader and Ninja Tag Systems
TOMY
SHONEN JUMP
VIZ media
Available October
Build Your Ultimate Squad then Battle Your Friends with Wi-Fi!
nintendo Wi-Fi connection
EVERYONE 10+
E 10+
Crude Humor
Mild Cartoon Violence
Suggestive Themes
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org
NINJA ACADEMY
Join Now at Naruto.Tomy-USA.com
D3PUBLISHER

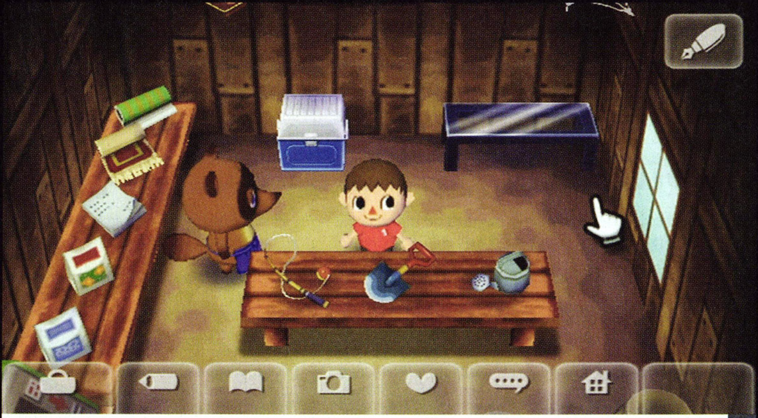
Naruto
"You'll pay for doing this to her!"

NARUTO ©2002 MASASHI KISHIMOTO. All Rights Reserved. SHONEN JUMP™ and NARUTO™ are trademarks of Shueisha, Inc. in the U.S. and other countries. This product is manufactured, distributed and sold under license from VIZ Media, LLC. All Rights Reserved. Game and Software ©2006 TOMY. PATH OF THE NINJA™ and © 2007 SHUEISHA. All Rights reserved. TOMY and its logo are trademarks of TOMY. VIZ Media and its logo are trademarks of VIZ Media, LLC. D3Publisher and its logo are trademarks of D3Publisher of America, Inc. Nintendo DS is a trademark of Nintendo. © 2004 Nintendo. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

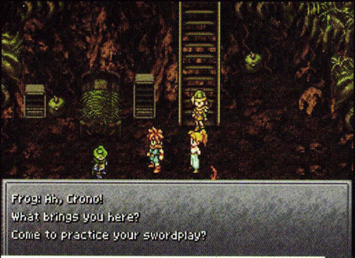
REVIEWS

IN-DEPTH REVIEWS OF ALL THE LATEST GAMES

Tom Nook tries to foreclose on us in Animal Crossing: City Folk. Economic hardship has never been more fun!

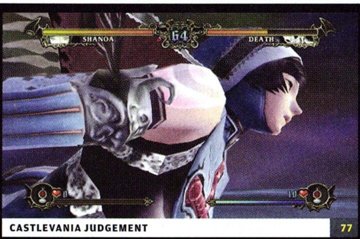


ANIMAL CROSSING: CITY FOLK 76

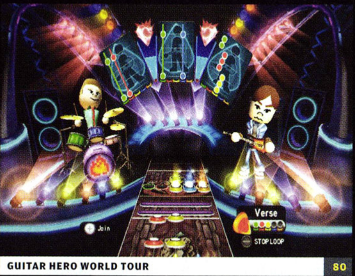


Frog: Ah, Crono!
What brings you here?
Come to practice your swordplay?

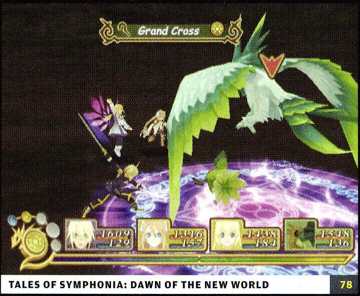
CHRONO TRIGGER 82



CASTLEVANIA JUDGEMENT 77

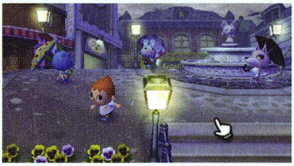


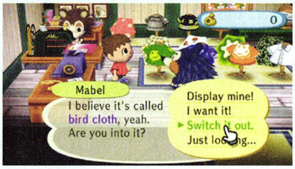
GUITAR HERO WORLD TOUR 80



TALES OF SYMPHONIA: DAWN OF THE NEW WORLD 78

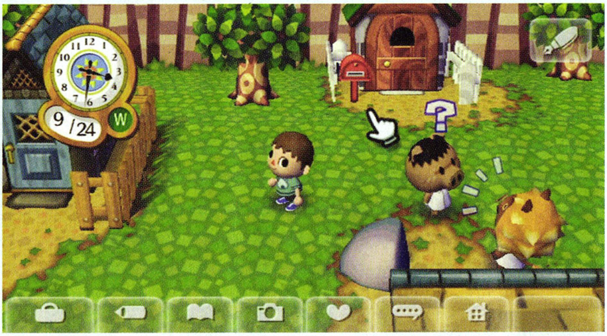
Age of Empires: Mythologies 84
Animal Crossing: City Folk 76
Castlevania Judgment 77
Chrono Trigger 82
Cooking Mama World Kitchen 80
Gauntlet 82
Guitar Hero World Tour 80
Luminous Arc 2 88
Metal Slug 7 80
Monster Lab (DS) 87
Monster Lab (Wii) 88
Moon 84
Mushroom Men: Rise of the Fungi 86
Mushroom Men: The Spore Wars 84
Need for Speed Undercover 87
Neopets Puzzle Adventure 87
Pokémon Ranger: Shadows of Almia 86
Rayman Raving Rabbids TV Party 86
Rygar: The Battle of Argus 77
Shaun White Snowboarding: Road Trip 84
Sonic Unleashed 80
Spider-Man: Web of Shadows 82
Star Wars The Clone Wars: Jedi Alliance 86
Star Wars The Clone Wars: Lightsaber Duels 89
Tales of Symphonia: Dawn of the New World 78
Tomb Raider Underworld 88
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2009 (DS) 89
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2009 (Wii) 87





Mabel

I believe it's called bird cloth, yeah. Are you into it?



Another Day in Paradise

ANIMAL CROSSING: CITY FOLK

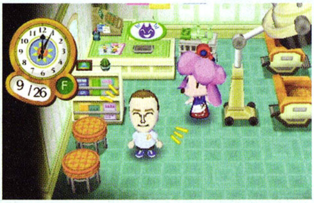
RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **NINTENDO**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Despite the lazy-day feel of fishing and chatting with the bunny next door, the Animal Crossing games are an obsession for millions of fans. I got hooked on the GameCube original, putting over a hundred hours into my lovely town of Slatesville before it met a terrible fate (the memory card that held it was lost forever in an attempt to mail it to my sister so she could tour my town). The blow of having lost all those hours spent bug-catching, tree-planting, fossil-digging, and paying off my house was so soul-destroying that I only dabbled in Wild World, the series' chart-topping second installment for Nintendo DS. My emotional wounds have finally healed, however, just in time for the release of Animal Crossing: City Folk for Wii.

For the uninitiated, here are the basics: the Animal Crossing games are kind of like Nintendo's version of The Sims, only less restrictive and without annoying bathroom breaks. As the only human kid in a world of cuddly critters, you explore town, get to know neighbors, decorate your house, and participate in numerous activities. There is no way to "beat" the game, but various small goals egg you on, such as completing collections of bugs, fish, and dinosaur bones. Creative players can spend hours making custom designs for items such as wallpaper and clothing (a welcome new addition: different designs can now be added to the front, back, and sleeves of a shirt). Players mostly buy, find, and trade items—there are too many pieces of furniture to count—to express their unique style. Everything costs money (referred to as bells), which can be earned by running errands or selling items.

City Folk adds more of everything that made the first two games great, polishes the graphics a little, improves the controls using the Wii remote and nunchuk, introduces voice chat via the new Wii Speak microphone, and—most notably—includes a shop-filled city square for villagers to travel to. All of this adds up to make City Folk the series' new standard-bearer, although none of these features evolve the experience in any significant way. As excited as I was to return to the world of Animal Crossing, I wish it had changed more since my last visit. This point is particularly driven home during the game's first half-hour, which is almost scene-for-scene the same first 30 minutes of the series' first title: you answer questions that decide your character's appearance while riding into town, take out a loan to buy a house, and go to work for shopkeep Tom Nook, running the exact same chores for him that you did before. It's probably true that this repeated series of events is simply the most effective way to introduce new players to the game's core concepts, but the lack of anything new right from the get-go underscores the fact that City Folk is mostly the same game we've seen twice already. If you've previously burnt out on common tasks like collecting seashells, selling fruit, and donating to collections at the museum, there aren't any new twists here that make them exciting again.



Having said that, the core gameplay is still so fun and charming that City Folk's few new enhancements were enough to hook me all over again. The new Wii remote pointer-driven menus are easier and more fun to use, which matters quite a bit since you're constantly adding to your inventory, checking the map, sending off letters, etc. (Writing letters, by the way, is a lot more enjoyable since you can now use a USB keyboard.) A good time can be had simply goofing off around town with up to three friends via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, especially when chatting through the Wii Speak mic. And although the new city locations offer quick distractions rather than substantive new gameplay features, their addition nonetheless broadens the game world in a fun and charming way.

Not every sword-swinging, platform-jumping gamer will dig the action-free approach of Animal Crossing, but I strongly encourage everyone to give it a try. As plenty of hardcore players have already discovered, this series is full of Nintendo's classic fun surprises, many of which only reveal themselves during certain in-game seasons, holidays, or other days of the year (the game world uses the console's internal date and time to mirror the real world). And if you're a Wild World player, all of the items you've already collected can be uploaded to a catalog in City Folk for an easy repurchase (once you've got the bells). New player or returning fan, young or old, casual or hardcore, Animal Crossing: City Folk could very well become your new obsession. **—CHRIS SL.**

WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT IS YOUR FONDEST MEMORY OF ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME?

Justin Cheng

My first published video game review was for Ocarina of Time, so the game holds a special place in my heart. (It was for my high school newspaper, but still....)

Chris Hoffman

I just remember coming home for Thanksgiving and playing the game for the first time while my mom and aunt cooked pies. Those were good times.

Tom Holoien

Jabu Jabu's belly. The sound effects and design really sell the idea that you're inside the big fish and immerse you more than anything else in the game.

Casey Loe

Finally coming up with a coherent walkthrough for the Water Temple for the Ocarina of Time strategy guide. Lost a lot of sleep over that one.

Chris Shepperd

After wrangling Epona, I must've done 20 laps around Hyrule Field. That moment solidified Ocarina's place in my top five forever.

George Sinfield

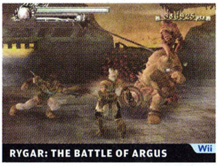
I remember being struck by an actual narrative beyond the usual "save the princess" line. The legend in The Legend of Zelda really began to take shape.

Chris Slate

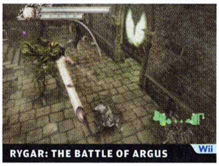
Aw, come on—it's gotta be Sheik! This mysterious character was elevated to all-new levels of cool once (his? her?) secret was revealed.

Steve Thomason

Everything. In my humble opinion, Ocarina of Time comes as close to perfection as any video game before or since. It is a true masterpiece of the art form.



RYGAR: THE BATTLE OF ARGUS Wii



RYGAR: THE BATTLE OF ARGUS Wii

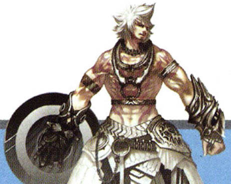
RYGAR: THE BATTLE OF ARGUS

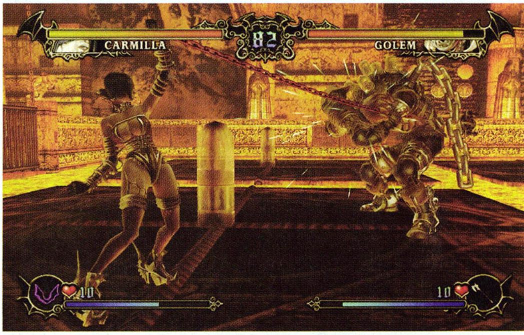
RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **TECMO**
DEVELOPER: **TECMO**
ESRB: **TEEN**

If you've ever wanted to play Sony's God of War on a Wii, Rygar: The Battle of Argus is as close as you're likely to get. An enhanced port of 2002's Rygar: The Legendary Adventure on PS2, Rygar: TBoA is a third-person action-adventure game that updates the classic arcade (or NES, depending on your first memories of the game) title with 3-D graphics and more-contemporary gameplay. With some new enemies, a new lead-character design, a new survival mode, and a touch of motion controls, Rygar: TBoA attempts to be the definitive version of the game. And although it mostly succeeds, the new Final Fantasy-style character design is just horrid—why change what was once simple and classic?

Being based on an older title, the game's design clearly shows its roots with some incredibly frustrating camera angles, a basic but enjoyable combat system, and some really hilarious dialog and voice acting. Thankfully, much of what made the PS2 game great—particularly the epic boss battles and stunning musical score—is carried over here, making Rygar: The Battle of Argus worth at least a rental. **—KAISER H.**





Lest Ye Be Judged

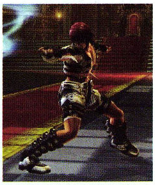
CASTLEVANIA JUDGMENT

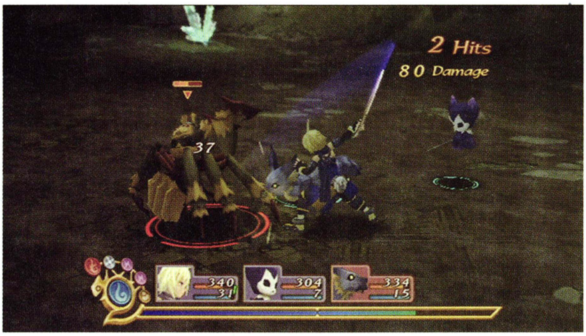
RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
DEVELOPER: **KONAMI/EIGHTING**
ESRB: **TEEN**

I know what you're thinking: "A Castlevania one-on-one fighting game? Really?" It's not what the series is known for, and it's not the Wii Castlevania game that people were expecting. In spite of being radically different from its action-adventure predecessors, however, Castlevania Judgment is actually pretty fun. Is it particularly deep? No. But what it lacks in finesse and precision it makes up for with its lightning-fast pace, flashy presentation, and pick-up-and-play accessibility. Though the move sets are limited, your repertoire of standard attacks, special attacks, unblockables, and gauge-based hyper moves adds just enough strategy to the combat while keeping the action suitably intense. Some aspects of battle are lacking—there are some balance issues, and the good ol' Castlevania subweapons are nearly worthless—but overall the fighting is solid, and it's complemented by effective control options (I found using the Classic controller to be more intuitive than the competent remote-and-nunchuk configuration) and a decent selection of modes and warriors (despite the omissions of Soma and Richter). Longtime vampire hunters should especially appreciate the interactions between characters and the attention to series continuity in Story mode. Sure, the character designs are questionable (while they look cool, it would have been nice if they more closely resembled their original counterparts), but the graphics and classic remixed music are excellent. If you forgo your expectations of what a Castlevania game should be—or are simply looking for a respectable 3-D fighting game—you should have a good time with Judgment. **—CHRIS H.**

ERIC
41
DEATH
10

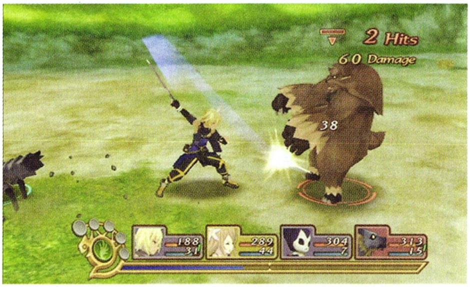




Richter

The mayor's given his permission for Emil to accompany me. Step aside.

Sweet Symphony



TALES OF SYMPHONIA: DAWN OF THE NEW WORLD

RATING: **8.0**

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **NAMCO BANDAI**
DEVELOPER: **NAMCO BANDAI**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Two in-game years after the events of Tales of Symphonia on GameCube, when—spoiler alert for those who never played that game—Sylvarant and Tethe'alla have merged, the brave new world has not quite become the paradise Symphonia protagonist Lloyd and his allies thought it would. The climates are out of whack and the citizens of Sylvarant and Tethe'alla are at odds, with some of those from Sylvarant banding together and forming a militia known as the Vanguard to fight the technologically superior Church of Martel devotees from Tethe'alla. Caught in the middle of this conflict are a magic-using girl named Marta, keeper of Ratatosk's core (Ratatosk controls all of the mana and monsters in the world, and it's because he's not in charge that the weather has gone haywire), and Marta's protector, Emil, a survivor from a Church of Martel/Vanguard battle in his hometown—a battle that was spearheaded by Lloyd. Empowered by Ratatosk and aided by Marta and the Centurion of Darkness, Tenebrae, the usually meek Emil—who switches to a more aggressive personality, à la Mr. Hyde, when provoked—swears revenge on Lloyd while seeking and gathering the other Centurion's cores in the hopes of restoring order to the world.

With a party of two (Emil and Marta, naturally), you've still got some of the cooperative element that was so enjoyable in the first Symphonia, with the rest of the four-person team filled out by AI-controlled monsters you've defeated and convinced to join your cause, Pokémon-style. As your monster pals fight more and level up, you're given the opportunity to make them evolve. Simply visit a Katz Guild stand and cook your monster a meal when it's ready to metamorphose. While this is definitely cool, your friends can't get in on the four-player action until the cast from the first game shows up and joins your party (albeit with different English voice actors for most of them; the new voice acting isn't bad, but I miss the original voices). Reuniting with these characters is a treat, especially considering that they were part of what made the first game shine. All of these returning characters have fixed experience levels and equipment, however, which is disappointing. Also slightly disappointing is the new world map: you choose where to go by selecting locations from a menu or by pointing at them with the remote, making it easier to find where you're supposed to go next, but removing much of the exploration. (Not that you would really need to do much exploration; the game mostly has you revisiting the same locales from the first Symphonia.)

There are some motion controls, of course, and they're more useful than not. As in the first Symphonia, you have a Sorcerer's Ring to help you get through dungeons. Before, you had to line up your character just so in order to, say, light a torch by shooting fire from your ring; now you can simply point your remote at the torch to light it. Also, you can associate Artes (special attacks) with motions, allowing you to easily use more Artes in battles. Unfortunately, the game doesn't always accurately recognize which way you're swinging. Some minigames—fishing, for instance—require waggling too, and it works well enough, even if it does feel a bit tacked on. You can also direct your character in dungeons and towns by pointing with the remote, but you're better off using the Control Stick.

Dawn of the New World doesn't have the epic feel of the original—the fact that it's easily beaten (not accounting for side quests) in under 30 hours doesn't help—but it's great to revisit this world that I enjoyed exploring when the first Tales of Symphonia was released four years ago. And if you have your completed save data from that game handy, you can unlock some bonuses when you start a new game in Dawn of the New World. **—JUSTIN C.**

Castlevania
Order of Ecclesia
Castlevania
Order of Ecclesia
NINTENDO DS
KONAMI
www.konami

AVAILABLE NOW!

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

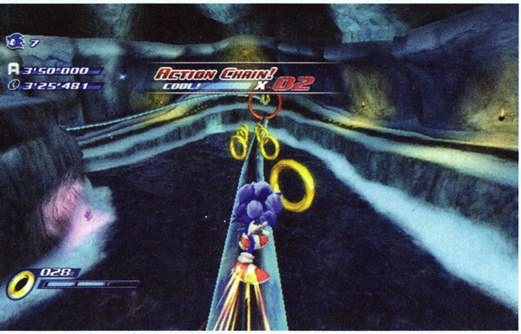
Blood
Fantasy Violence

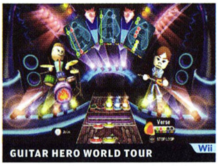
Online Interactions Not Rated by The ESRB

© 2008 Konami Digital Entertainment. KONAMI is a registered trademark of KONAMI CORPORATION. The rating icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association. Nintendo DS is a trademark of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo

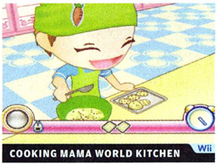
NINTENDO DS™

KONAMI
www.konami.com

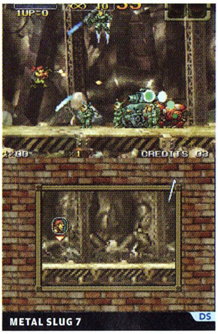




GUITAR HERO WORLD TOUR



COOKING MAMA WORLD KITCHEN



METAL SLUG 7

Beast Processing

SONIC UNLEASHED

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **SONIC TEAM**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

When Sonic Unleashed is good, it's really good. During the daytime stages, when you're blasting through gorgeous environments at breakneck speeds, squealing around corners, side-stepping obstacles, stringing together attacks on Dr. Robotnik's forces, and flying through the air on chains of rings, the game provides an adrenaline rush that's as exhilarating as anything Sega's Blue Blur has ever been involved with—and the action gets even better when the camera switches to a side view to deliver that classic Sonic feel.

The nighttime stages, on the other hand, aren't quite as brilliant. Pounding baddies is pretty satisfying, but it admittedly takes a while to get used to the imprecise controls. Brawling via gestures is iffy at best; it feels a lot better if you play the night stages using the Classic controller, though even then you'll often haphazardly fly right past your target. Platforming at night can be tricky at first, too.

If the nighttime areas wear thin, it's because there's just so many of them. For each full-length daytime stage you get, there are three or more nighttime stages. In fact, the whole game seems to suffer from strange structural issues. The menu-based exploration elements are so shallow they serve almost no purpose, and the mandatory replaying of daytime stages (with new objectives such as completing a timed run or collecting a certain number of rings) feels like artificial lengthening. Nonetheless, even when the game gets tedious the action is still a blast, and the graphics are among the best yet on Wii. If you don't mind some fisticuffs mixed into your high-speed thrills, give Sonic Unleashed a shot. **—CHRIS H.**

GUITAR HERO WORLD TOUR

RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**
DEVELOPER: **VICARIOUS VISIONS**
ESRB: **TEEN**

So what makes Guitar Hero World Tour stand out from the already-released Rock Band? The song list is varied (there are some Spanish-language songs, too), and you can craft your own tracks if you want with the deep, daunting Music Studio mode. I prefer the Guitar Hero guitars to Rock Band's guitars overall, but I could do without the new touch pad on the guitar's neck—it can be hard to use since you can't really tell which part of the pad you're touching without looking at it or guessing. Even if you don't use the touch pad, World Tour can be a tough game; thankfully it's far more accessible than Guitar Hero III. **—JUSTIN C.**

COOKING MAMA WORLD KITCHEN

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **MAJESCO**
DEVELOPER: **COOKING MAMA LTD.**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Now that Cooking Mama has entered its fourth iteration, the cooking-via-minigame premise is in danger of becoming stale. The developers have responded to this by updating the visual style, adding minigames within minigames, and injecting a customizable avatar as your in-game persona. They've also introduced more recipes and new motion controls, of course. That's all well and good, but they haven't improved the lackluster structure—there's still no arcade mode or story mode, and the new modes that are featured, such as a minigame competition against Mama, aren't especially exciting. Additionally, you're often punished for performing actions too vigorously, which seems contrary to the frantic action that made the series so fun in the first place. Cooking Mama World Kitchen isn't bad, but it could have been better. **—CHRIS H.**

METAL SLUG 7

RATING: 7.5

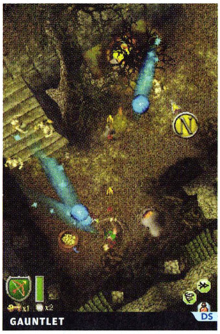
PLATFORM: **DS**
PUBLISHER: **IGNITION**
DEVELOPER: **SNK PLAYMORE**
ESRB: **TEEN**

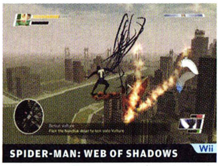
Despite the fact that Metal Slug 7 was developed from the ground up for the DS, it looks, plays, and feels like an honest-to-goodness Metal Slug arcade game (with one glaring exception: no co-op play). The run-and-gun action is intense, there are plenty of power-ups to collect and enemies to shoot, and variable difficulty settings and extra challenges will keep you playing for hours on end. While that's all good, it seems like the developers are merely going through the motions; except for the new giant mech vehicle, this feels like extremely familiar ground, and the bland, brown environments are awfully uninspired. Metal Slug 7 is a solid, fun shooter, but it lacks the ingenuity of the better games in the series. **—CHRIS H.**

The Time For Judgment Has Come!

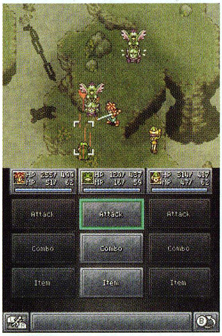
Available This Winter
Castlevania Judgment
Wii
KONAMI
SYPHA
MARIA
MARIA
SIMON
Wii
KONAMI
www.konami.com
TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Suggestive Themes
Violence
Online Interactions Not Rated by The ESRB

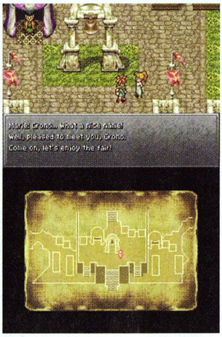
© 2008 Konami Digital Entertainment KONAMI is a registered trademark of KONAMI CORPORATION. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association. Wii and Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo.


GAUNTLET


SPIDER-MAN: WEB OF SHADOWS

SPIDER-MAN: WEB OF SHADOWS




Marle: Crono... What a nice name! Well, pleased to meet you, Crono. Come on, let's enjoy the fair!

GAUNTLET

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: **DS**
PUBLISHER: **EIDOS**
DEVELOPER: **BACKBONE ENTERTAINMENT**
ESRB: **TEEN**

The original Gauntlet has always held a special place in my heart, since it's one of the few games that I could sit down and enjoy with my brother—myself playing as an enthusiast and my brother as more of a pick-up-and-play guy. Due to those memories, I always looked forward to new entries in the series, but usually I found myself disappointed, especially as the franchise entered the 3-D realm and strayed from the formula that made it fun to begin with. With Gauntlet on DS, I think they've finally hit the sweet spot—a nice balance of old-school mentality and modern game-design sensibilities. The varied and well-designed levels and helpful special moves—along with the lack of ever-draining health—remind you that games have come a long way since Gauntlet hit arcades, while the top-down action, awesome retro voices, swarms of enemies, and simple controls keep things accessible. The soundtrack, which features some nice remixes of old Gauntlet tunes and some moody *Lord of the Rings*-sounding tracks, also impresses. That's not to say there isn't room for improvement. The one-hit deaths feel awfully cheap, I wish you could carry more than one potion at a time, and I got blindsided plenty of times because I was forced to change my attacking angle while rotating the screen's orientation. I don't know if I'll be able to convince my brother to play (it's probably too hardcore for him), but I, at least, am satisfied. —**CHRIS H.**

SPIDER-MAN: WEB OF SHADOWS

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**
DEVELOPER: **SHABA GAMES**
ESRB: **TEEN**

An ambitious blend of sandbox play and mission-based storytelling, Web of Shadows occasionally gets stuck in frustrating bottlenecks due to a few gesture-driven controls that would be better left to button presses, and a navigation system that doesn't account for vertical movement. The frustration will build whenever you're tasked with finding something that is attached to the side of a building. Prerelease marketing materials made much of the fact that you can influence which characters you ally with by switching between red- and black-suit Spidey. Those decisions amount to story junctures in which you do or don't side with the likes of Black Cat and Vulture. The suit changes (one of those gratuitous gesture-based functions) allow you to switch between fast and agile combat (red suit) and brute force (black suit). Spidey fans will revel in a brand-new story. Adventure fans will wish for more refined and even play. **—GEORGE S.**

All-Time Great

CHRONO TRIGGER

RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: **DS**
PUBLISHER: **SQUARE ENIX**
DEVELOPER: **SQUARE ENIX/TOSE**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Chrono Trigger has received a lot of hype and praise since its debut on the Super NES in 1995—and it's all well-deserved. Standing at the pinnacle of the RPG genre, Chrono Trigger really has it all: a simple yet fun battle system, great characters, fantastic music, detailed hand-drawn visuals that hold up even more than a decade after they were originally created, and a story that manages to be epic while simultaneously intimate and touching. The game also goes where few others have gone before (or since): being able to time-travel through the ages gives the tale a vast scope and creates the feeling that you're able to shape the world by taking action in the past. Multiple endings that make the game the most replayable RPG ever are icing on the cake. That's not to say the DS version is perfect; the modified translation somehow feels less inspired then the original, and, like in the PlayStation version of the game, there is a brief lag after battles.

Of course, if you've already conquered Chrono Trigger in its previous incarnations, your big question is probably whether the new content makes it worth playing yet again. The answer: not especially. The new areas are enjoyable, to be sure, but they're not directly connected to the story, and they focus more on combat than anything else. The Dimensional Vortex dungeons, in particular, would have benefited from better designs instead of a reliance in large part on recycled maps. And though the monster-battle arena is a nifty idea, you're more an observer than an active participant. Still, it's hard to fault a game for what are essentially bonus features. Despite my criticisms, Chrono Trigger is an amazing adventure and a required purchase for ardent fans and anyone who's never played the game before. **—CHRIS H.**

Follow a Trail to Hidden Secrets and Sabotage!
Wii
NANCY DREW
The White Wolf of Icicle Creek
SEGA

Uncover a Trail of Secrets and Sabotage in

NANCY DREW®
The White Wolf of Icicle Creek

Unexplained explosions and a lone white wolf haunt the bewildered guests of the Icicle Creek Lodge in the Canadian Rockies. Is there a plot to sabotage this wilderness resort? It's up to you, as Nancy Drew, to go undercover as a hired employee and track down the culprit!

AVAILABLE DECEMBER 2008!

Order online at www.HerInteractive.com or call 1-800-461-8787. Also in stores!

EVERYONE™
E
Mild Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

Wii™

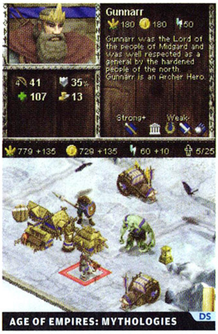
Copyright © 2008 Her Interactive, Inc. HER INTERACTIVE and the HER INTERACTIVE logo are trademarks of Her Interactive, Inc. NANCY DREW is a trademark of Simon & Schuster, Inc. and is used under license. Copyright in the NANCY DREW books and characters is owned by Simon & Schuster, Inc. All rights reserved. Licensed by permission of Simon & Schuster, Inc. Other brands or product names are trademarks of their respective holders. SEGA of America, Inc. SEGA is registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. SEGA and the SEGA logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Sega Corporation. The Nintendo Wii logo is a trademark of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo.

HeR interactive

SEGA®

MOON DS

MUSHROOM MEN: THE SPORE WARS Wii



Gunnarr

Gunnarr was the Lord of the people of Midgard and was well respected as a general by the hardened people of the north. Gunnarr is an Archer Hero.

AGE OF EMPIRES: MYTHOLOGIES DS

Flying Tomato Approved

SHAUN WHITE SNOWBOARDING: ROAD TRIP

RATING: **7.0**

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**
DEVELOPER: **UBISOFT MONTREAL**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Shaun White Snowboarding: Road Trip has gotten a lot of press, and rightfully so. It's not every day that a title athlete in a sports game actually helps develop the game, and Mr. White's influence can be seen throughout this solid title.

The devs set out to make Road Trip stand out from other versions of Shaun White Snowboarding, and they succeeded. Whether you're playing with the Wii remote, tilting and flicking to steer and do tricks, or whether you're using the Balance Board, the controls are tight and immerse you in the game more than is possible on other systems. This is really the first good use of the Balance Board since Wii Fit, and once you get the hang of snowboarding on it you won't want to stop.

The game's graphics look great too, and I really appreciate the ability to change the background music at will. However, the game does have some flaws: the only objectives you'll encounter are time trials, races, score battles, and item-collecting, and this makes the single-player mode grow old fast. It can also be difficult to pull off the tricks you want, especially when using the remote, but this is more of an annoyance than a real problem since it won't affect your score much. Despite these issues, Road Trip makes a great party game (you can play co-op or versus with up to four people), and I highly recommend it for anyone looking to dust off their Balance Board. **—TOM H.**

MOON

RATING: **7.5**

PLATFORM: **DS**
PUBLISHER: **MASTIFF**
DEVELOPER: **RENEGADE KID**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Quickly becoming the torchbearers for the FPS genre on the DS, Renegade Kid builds on lessons learned from last year's horror title Dementium: The Ward. Their atmospheric new adventure, Moon, is another stunning technical achievement. The game ratchets up the action with a solid variety of monsters to fight, as well as tricky passages that can be traversed only with the aid of a little radio-controlled drone that can fit through small spaces. Sections of vehicle-based exploring on the moon's surface do well to mix up the pace, too. But monotony creeps into Moon as the levels wear on; each hallway begins to look like the one before and every area's objectives feel pretty much the same. Still, building a compelling story and diverse gameplay into an FPS is hard; for Renegade Kid to do it twice on the DS is extraordinary. **—CHRIS SH.**

MUSHROOM MEN: THE SPORE WARS

RATING: **8.0**

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **GAMECOCK**
DEVELOPER: **RED FLY STUDIO**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

I'm pleasantly surprised by Mushroom Men: The Spore Wars. Though it has some flaws, such as frustratingly inaccurate motion controls and dark, drab environments, at its heart it's a fun platformer with unique and varied gameplay. Numerous puzzles and hidden items to collect give the game depth, and combat—especially boss fights—is impressively deep. Though the aforementioned darkness makes things hard to see at times, viewing the world from the perspective of a mushroom lends normally mundane objects a totally new feel. If you're hungry for some classic 3-D platforming, Mushroom Men is definitely worth checking out. **—TOM H.**

AGE OF EMPIRES: MYTHOLOGIES

RATING: **7.0**

PLATFORM: **DS**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **GRIPTONITE GAMES**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

The DS Age of Empires doesn't bear much resemblance to the PC game that spawned it, but that doesn't mean it can't be a fun challenge in its own right. It combines a simpler turn-based combat system with some RTS holdovers—besides maneuvering your troops around the battlefield, you have to build a base back home and use it to train a bigger, more powerful army.

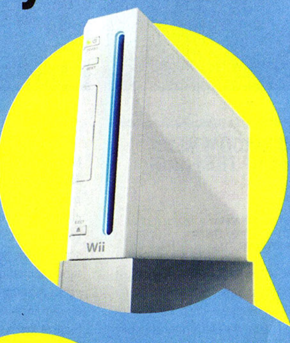
While the Egypt campaign that starts out the game is a bit dry, business picks up in the other two legs of the single-player mode, especially the Norse campaign. Mastering the logistical side of things offers plenty of rewards for thoughtful players, and there's nothing like clearing the map with the blades of your wolf-riding Valkyrie hordes. **—DAVID S.**

NINTENDO POWER

READERS!

Nintendo Power needs your voice

You can help us make Nintendo Power even better by taking our short survey at http://www.nintendopower.com/magsurvey before December 8, 2008. Not only will this make you our new best friend, but you'll also be eligible to win either a Wii™ console, or a copy of Wario Land™: Shake It! for the Wii console. You get to help improve the magazine and possibly win some loot—it's a win-win!



Wii
WARIO LAND
SHAKE IT!
E

GRAND PRIZE
(1 winner):
Wii console

SECOND PRIZE
(3 winners):
Wario Land: Shake It! for the Wii console

Mii CHARACTERS CAN ONLY BE CREATED ON THE Wii CONSOLE.

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Comic Mischief
Mild Cartoon Violence

No purchase is necessary. As a contestant or survey participant, you have not yet won. Void in Vermont, Rhode Island, Puerto Rico and where prohibited by law. Survey entry not necessary to win – see http://www.nintendopower.com/magsurveyrules

OFFICIAL RULES

1. NO PURCHASE IS NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. Participation constitutes respondent's full and unconditional agreement to and acceptance of these Official Rules. This incentive drawing begins when invitations are emailed to readers (approximately October 31rst), and ends at midnight, December 8th, 2008. Incentive prizes are provided by Future US.

2. Eligibility: The Incentive drawing is open to readers of Nintendo Power magazine who are at least 13 years of age. Participants under age 13 must have their parents enter on their behalf. Employees and officers of Accelara Research and of the Survey Sponsor, as well as its parent company and affiliates, advertising, promotion, and fulfillment agencies, their immediate family members and persons living in their same household are not eligible to participate in the Incentive. The offer is void where prohibited. All laws and regulations apply.

3. How to Enter: You may enter the Incentive drawing by completing the survey online. If you do not wish to complete the survey you may enter the Incentive drawing by printing your name, street address, city, county, postal code, telephone number, complete e-mail address and the words "Nintendo Power Reader Survey drawing entry" on a sheet of paper and sending it to Privacy Officer, Accelara Research, PO Box 326 , Harrisville , NH 03450-0326 . These words are necessary to identify the specific incentive contest being entered. Mail-in entries that do not include these identifying words will not be valid. Entries must be received by the end of the Incentive Period. Only one entry per person or e-mail address is permitted. All entries become the exclusive property of Accelara Research and will not be acknowledged or returned.

4. Incentives: Participants completing the online survey will have the option to enter the incentive drawing. One grand prize, Wii™ (Approximate Retail Value: $249.99 each), and three second prizes, Wario Land™: Shake It! (Approximate Retail Value: $49.99 each), will be awarded to participants in this survey. Respondents will indicate their correct email address where they may be contacted should they be winners. No alternative prize, cash, or other substitution is permitted except by discretion of the prize sponsor in the event of incentive unavailability. In this case a similar incentive of equal or greater value will be substituted at the sole discretion of the prize sponsor. The incentive is nontransferable and non-saleable. All taxes are the sole responsibility of the winner.

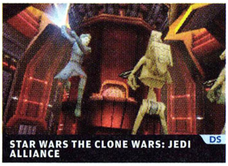
5. Selection of Winners: Winner will be determined by random drawing from all eligible respondents that complete the survey and entries received by mail. The selection of winners will be completed by Accelara Research within 60 days after the closing date of this survey. All decisions are final and binding. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of completed surveys and other eligible entries received by mail. Winners will be notified by e-mail within 15 days of the drawing. All winners will have 7 days from notification to accept the Incentive by e-mail and will be instructed as to who to contact at that time. Accelara Research is not responsible for and shall not be liable for late, lost or misdirected entries or unsuccessful efforts to notify winners. All winners may be required to sign and return a release of liability, declaration of eligibility and, where lawful, publicity consent agreement, all within 10 days of acknowledged notification. By accepting the incentive, Winner agrees to the use of his/her name, voice and/or likeness for the purpose of advertising, trade or promotion without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. If a selected winner cannot be contacted, fails to reply within 7 days to notification at the address provided, is ineligible, fails to claim an incentive or fails to return the completed and executed declaration and releases as required, Incentive may be forfeited and an alternate winner selected. In the event of a dispute regarding who submitted an on-line or mail-in entry, the entry will be deemed submitted by the authorized account holder of the e-mail account.

6. Conditions: By entering, each respondent agrees to be bound by these Official Rules and the decisions of Accelara Research, which shall be final. Accelara Research, agents and representatives of Accelara Research, its survey sponsor, affiliates, subsidiaries, advertising, promotion, and fulfillment agencies and legal advisors are not responsible for and shall not be liable for: (i) telephone, electronic, hardware or software program, network, Internet or computer malfunctions, failures or difficulties of any kind; (ii) failed, incomplete, garbled or delayed computer transmissions; (iii) any condition caused by events beyond the control of the Accelara Research that may cause the Incentive to be disrupted or corrupted; (iv) any injuries, losses or damages of any kind arising in connection with or as a result of the Incentive, or acceptance, possession or use of the Incentive, or from participation in the Incentive; or (v) any printing or typographical errors in any materials associated with the Incentive. Accelara Research reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to suspend or cancel the survey and the Incentive at any time if a computer virus, bug, tampering, unauthorized intervention or other technical problem of any sort corrupts the administration, security or proper play of the survey and Incentive. Accelara Research also reserves the right to disqualify, in its sole discretion, any person tampering with the entry process, the operation of the Web Site, or who is otherwise in violation of the rules. By participating in the surveys and the Incentive, each respondent agrees to release and hold Accelara Research and the employees, officers, directors, shareholders, agents, representatives of Accelara Research, its parent company, affiliates, subsidiaries, advertising, promotion and fulfillment agencies and legal advisors harmless from any and all losses, damages, rights, claims and actions of any kind in connection with the Incentive or resulting from acceptance, possession or use of any Incentive, including, without limitation, personal injury, death and property damage, and claims based on publicity rights, defamation or invasion of privacy.

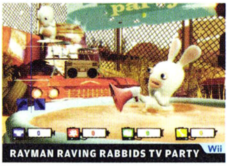
7. Winners List And Official Rules: All eligible respondents that complete a survey are entitled to a copy of the winners list for that particular survey. To obtain a copy of the winners list or a copy of these Official Rules, respondents must mail a request along with a stamped addressed envelope to: Privacy Officer, Accelara Research, PO Box 326 , Harrisville , NH , 03450-0326, USA . Requests for any list of winners must include the respondents name and phone number or email address used in the survey and must clearly identify the survey. Accelara Research will verify the eligibility of the respondent to receive the list of winners for that particular survey requested based on the survey identified and the email address provided. The request must be received no later than sixty (60) days after the closing date of the survey. The respondent will be required to sign an agreement covering the confidentiality and proper use of the list of winners. The agreement will contain restrictions and limitations on the ability of the respondent that receives the list to contact or disclose the information on the list.

© 2008 Nintendo. Nintendo properties are trademarks of Nintendo.

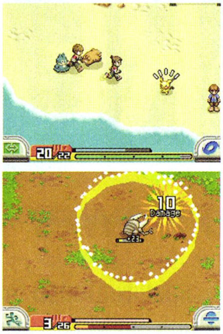
MUSHROOM MEN: RISE OF THE FUNGI DS



STAR WARS THE CLONE WARS: JEDI ALLIANCE DS



RAYMAN RAVING RABBIDS TV PARTY Wii



Marine Cave

MUSHROOM MEN: RISE OF THE FUNGI

RATING: **5.0**

PLATFORM: **DS**
PUBLISHER: **GAMECOCK**
DEVELOPER: **RED FLY STUDIO**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Rise of the Fungi is one of the most infuriating games to come along in a while. Despite being packed with good ideas, the platformer stumbles constantly in its execution. The combination of button controls and touch-screen spellcasting is awkward. The level design, in its attempt to look and feel organic, leaves you guessing at what is and isn't stable ground. And the weapons system is hindered by its flexibility—you can create so many weapons from the items you pick up that you can barely tell your creations apart. There's no question that the video game world needs new stories, and Mushroom Men tells an original one, but the plot peeks through only between unrelated fetch quests. **—CHRIS SH.**

STAR WARS THE CLONE WARS: JEDI ALLIANCE

RATING: **6.0**

PLATFORM: **DS**
PUBLISHER: **LUCASARTS**
DEVELOPER: **LUCASARTS SINGAPORE**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Jedi Alliance isn't an action game even though it has some action in it. It's more like a point-and-click graphic adventure—a genre that LucasArts dominated once upon a time. Unfortunately, those chops are a little rusty these days, though some of the old magic still shines through.

Most of the game's problems have to do with the action elements. The stylus controls aren't nearly as precise as they need to be, especially when it comes to lightsaber combat—mashing on the touch screen in the general direction of a target sometimes works, but it isn't very satisfying. Exploring the world and solving puzzles with a two-man team of Jedi is more fun, though, and there's enough background detail to hold the attention of die-hard Star Wars fans. **—DAVID S.**

RAYMAN RAVING RABBIDS TV PARTY

RATING: **5.5**

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**
DEVELOPER: **UBISOFT PARIS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

With its third installment in three years, the Raving Rabbids series is quickly growing stale. Most of TV Party's minigames recycle the same tired concepts from its predecessors, and while the addition of Wii Balance Board support is certainly welcome, the execution is uninspired and often frustrating. Plus, where the first two games owed much of their appeal to the comic hijinks of the titular bunnies, the laughs here are few and far between. The whole act just feels played out, and the promotional materials created for TV Party parody television and pop culture better than anything you'll find in the actual game. The rabbids still provide some decent fun with friends, but they desperately need to evolve. **—STEVE T.**

Back on the Range

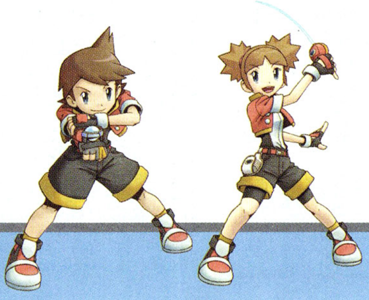
POKÉMON RANGER: SHADOWS OF ALMIA

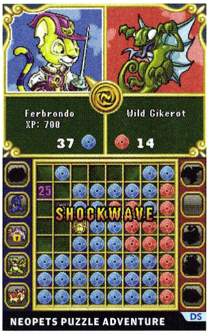
RATING: **8.0**

PLATFORM: **DS**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **THE POKÉMON COMPANY, CREATURES**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

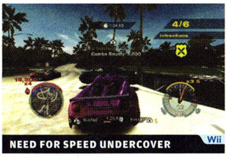
The spin on Pokémon Ranger: Shadows of Almia is that it combines the unique lassoing action of the Capture Styler (which has players demonstrate their affection for a Pokémon by drawing circles around it with the stylus) with the fun of collecting Pokémon. Wrangling wild Pokémon was a fresh concept when it debuted in the first Pokémon Ranger two years ago, and thanks to several well-considered improvements it's a much friendlier activity in Shadows. Perhaps the most welcome change is that you can now lift the stylus from the touch screen without incurring a penalty; that results in fewer do-over captures and a more-natural feel. As you delve into Shadows, you'll discover that capturing wild Pokémon and battling Team Dim Sun requires more than stamina and mad stylus skills. The expeditious use of Poké Assists will help you wear down tough opponents and motivate you to learn which of the game's many Pokémon (including 17 Partner Pokémon that can join you over the course of the game) are best suited to a situation.

But Shadows of Almia isn't an endless series of dizzying captures. The story (involving your rise from the Ranger School to the exalted position of Top Ranger) neatly links battles, puzzles, and exploration of the diverse Almia region as you strive to save it from Team Dim Sun. Part of the game's charm is suggested by the evildoers' name—these criminals are truly dim, and the comic potential of them continually revealing their plans is a fully realized hoot. When you cast back the shadows, this Ranger emerges as solid, engaging fun for Pokémon fans of all ages. **—SCOTT P.**

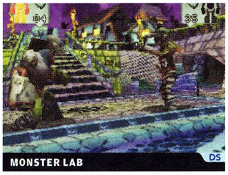




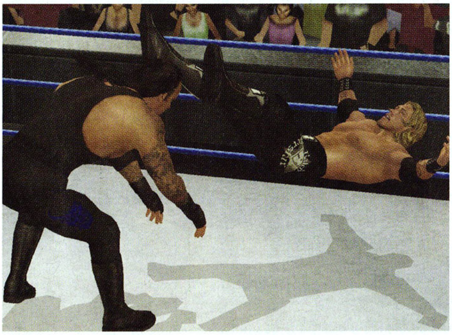
NEOPETS PUZZLE ADVENTURE DS



NEED FOR SPEED UNDERCOVER Wii



MONSTER LAB DS



NEOPETS PUZZLE ADVETURE

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: **DS**
PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**
DEVELOPER: **GRIPTONITE GAMES**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Though Neopets Puzzle Adventure is wrapped in the kid-friendly shell of the Neopets universe, the game is surprisingly entertaining. Developed by the people behind Puzzle Quest, Puzzle Adventure has you battling AI or human opponents in a slightly modified version of the tile-flipping game Othello. The goal is to have the most tiles at the end of the game, and you can use petpets (like power-ups) to make special moves such as playing two tiles at once. However, the game's AI is child-friendly and poses little challenge, so if you're not playing against a friend this one will probably grow old quickly. **—TOM H.**

NEED FOR SPEED UNDERCOVER

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
DEVELOPER: **EA BLACK BOX**
ESRB: **TEEN**

After a brief foray into legal street racing with last year's ProStreet, the Need for Speed series goes back to its *The Fast and the Furious* roots—almost literally, as Undercover's story is similar to that movie's. As an undercover agent, you meet a variety of shady characters through cheesy (in a good way) cut-scenes. The racing itself is arcadey fun—though it can get annoyingly repetitive, especially when you spend a long time trying to evade the cops. The game supports an array of control schemes (including Classic or GameCube controllers), which is a definite plus. However, this is one ugly game with lots of pop-in. It's hard to avoid oncoming traffic when you don't see vehicles until they're almost right in your face. **—JUSTIN C.**

MONSTER LAB

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **DS**
PUBLISHER: **EIDOS**
DEVELOPER: **BACKBONE ENTERTAINMENT**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

First it was Death Jr. and now it's Monster Lab; Backbone Entertainment clearly has a penchant for the macabre. By artfully digging up mad-scientist movie elements (creepy castles, scary forests, and irate villagers), the game offers the perfect setting for a creature-building-and-fighting simulation. Actions are stylus-driven and the fights are turn-based, with the goal being for you to take apart your opponent piece-by-piece. The battles are perhaps a little too easy early on and the AI-controlled enemies are not very savvy, but a slew of fairly challenging minigames (which net you ingredients needed to make more monster parts) will keep your interest piqued while the rest of the game ramps up. A rock-paper-scissors relationship between monster types is par for the course, however, and it feels unnecessary in an otherwise unconventional adventure. **—GEORGE S.**

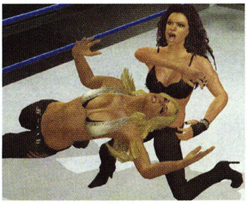
Gold Standard

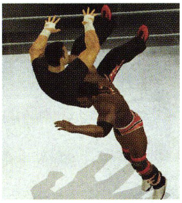
WWE SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2009

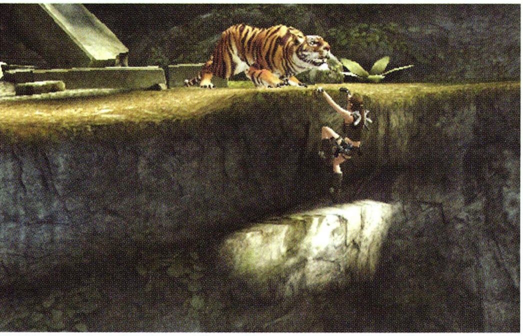
RATING: 8.0

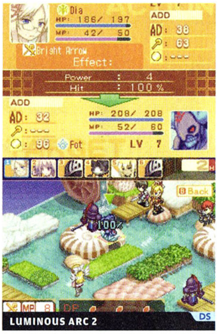
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **YUKE'S**
ESRB: **TEEN**

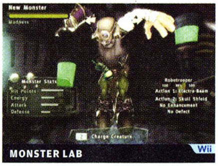
What a difference a year makes. Last year's version of WWE SmackDown vs. Raw was light on everything but untapped potential; the 2009 edition, on the other hand, is packed with features and significantly enhanced gameplay. Virtually every WWE wrestler is on the roster, and all the major match types (cage matches, ladder matches, Royal Rumble, Money in the Bank, Hell in a Cell, backstage brawls, and more) are featured, many with unique and effective Wii-specific controls. THQ and Yuke's did a great job with the story and career modes, too; some of the six superstar-specific storylines in Road to WrestleMania mode are better than what's currently on WWE television programs (although the Undertaker's story is notably terrible), and the career mode provides robust, open-ended options to take your favorite grappler to the top. In addition, new controls that combine analog-stick movements with button presses and gestures provide a much more diverse, fulfilling array of moves, but sometimes the game didn't recognize twisting motions of the Wii remote. There are other problems, too, such as awkward animation transitions and graphical clipping, but there are a more than equal number of positive flourishes, such as full roster customization, vastly improved commentary, and interactive entrances and victory celebrations. Our online experience, unfortunately, was full of lag, but even discounting Wi-Fi play, WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2009 is by far the best wrestling game to hit a Nintendo system in ages. **—CHRIS H.**

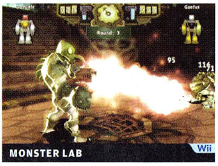












On the Brink

TOMB RAIDER UNDERWORLD

RATING: **7.0**

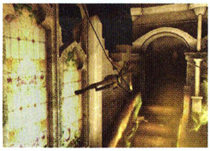
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **EIDOS**
DEVELOPER: **CRYSTAL DYNAMICS/BUZZ MONKEY**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Lara's latest adventure has a lot going for it. First and foremost, Tomb Raider's trademark brand of platforming remains as graceful and satisfying as ever. There's a certain harmony in the way Lady Croft moves through her surroundings, and Underworld's levels are some of the best designed and most organic in the series to date. The game also shares its heroine's stunning good looks; few other Wii titles can match the amazing texture work or the size and complexity of these environments. Plus many of the contrived (and annoying) motion controls that plagued Tomb Raider: Anniversary are gone.

So it's incredibly frustrating that so many niggling problems prevent the game from realizing its full potential. The Wii-specific puzzles are insultingly simple, flaccid sound effects really dampen the mood, and sloppy collision detection frequently sends Lara to her death through no fault of your own. And though combat has never been Tomb Raider's strong point, it's *so* uninteresting and completely void of tension here that you wonder why the developers even bothered. The biggest offender, however, is the camera. It just never seems to want to cooperate, and you'll find yourself constantly wrestling with it to get the desired view. Such issues are especially egregious in a game where one wrong step can be lethal.

Tomb Raider Underworld is still one of the better multiplatform games on Wii, and stands in stark contrast to other such efforts that typically come across as little more than an afterthought. That it falls just short of even greater heights doesn't negate the game's accomplishments, but it certainly is disappointing.

—STEVE T.



LUMINOUS ARC 2

RATING: **7.0**

PLATFORM: **DS**
PUBLISHER: **ATLUS**
DEVELOPER: **IMAGEEPOCH**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Like its predecessor, Luminous Arc 2 is a game of limited ambitions. Its stripped-down take on the Final Fantasy Tactics formula offers little in the way of fresh ideas or customization options, but its lengthy quest of 40+ well-tuned battles offers a satisfying experience for new and experienced players alike.

Luminous Arc 2 is set in a world where a witch civil war is beginning to threaten the safety of humanity. Young Roland and his band of knights set out to unify the witches, recruiting them one-by-one in a quest that is half generic-RPG melodrama and half witch-dating sim. Whenever a comely young witch joins Roland's quest, she and Roland exchange unity rings and can then get "engaged" on the battlefield, which brings up a picture of the witch in a wedding dress and allows Roland to use her elemental abilities for a few turns. The whole marriage-as-game-mechanic thing is bizarre, but right at home in a series that's more concerned with being quirky and cute than making sense.

At least the battles have taken a turn for the serious, with deadlier foes and more limited healing options that force players to anticipate enemy actions and make chess-like sacrifices of their troops. Luminous Arc 2 is far tougher than its predecessor but it needn't ever be frustrating, as guild quests and online battles provide fun ways to level up your party. This series may still be clinging tightly to Final Fantasy Tactics's coattails, but at least it's doing a better job of it.

—CASEY L.

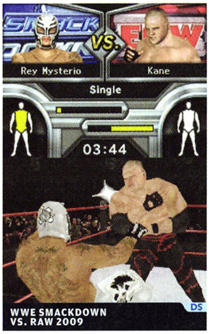
MONSTER LAB

RATING: **6.5**

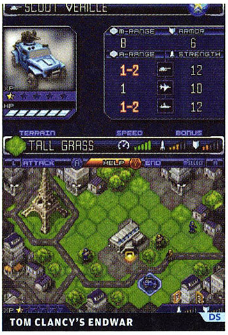
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **EIDOS**
DEVELOPER: **BACKBONE ENTERTAINMENT**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Monster Lab is made up of three different games—like Frankenstein's monster is made up of other people's body parts. There's the Pokémon-style game where you collect monster body parts; there's an action-adventure game where your monster helps townsfolk or completes minigames; and there's combat, which is a lot like *BattleBots*—only the monsters take turns hitting each other. The combat uses a rock-paper-scissors mechanic where mechanical monster parts are better than biological parts, biological parts are better than alchemical parts, and so on. The combat is fun, if monotonous, but overall the game's components don't quite fit together. And sometimes it's downright upsetting, like when you have to smash little robots that plead for their lives. Maybe a must-own for Tim Burton fans, but definitely a rental for everyone else.

—AMANDA G.



WWE SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2009



TOM CLANCY'S ENDWAR

WWE SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2009

RATING: **4.0**

PLATFORM: **DS**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **TOSE**
ESRB: **TEEN**

THQ's new WWE game for the DS gets only one thing wrong. Unfortunately, that one thing is pretty important. The season mode is involving, the create-a-wrestler has tons of parts and moves, the 3-D arenas and wrestlers are almost shockingly detailed...but the touch-screen controls just don't work very well.

SmackDown vs. Raw 2009 uses a stylus-based grappling system. Instead of tapping buttons, you draw motions on the screen to lock up and slam your opponent. It's a neat idea, but the command response is just inconsistent enough that the CPU will regularly beat you to the punch, especially against a quicker opponent. The DS has plenty of buttons—why not just use the console version's control scheme? It's a good question, and hopefully THQ will give us an answer in next year's edition. **—DAVID S.**

ALSO THIS MONTH:

The holiday season is upon us, and that means lots of games—way more than we can fit into these pages, in fact. While we reviewed their Wii counterparts this issue, you should also be on the lookout for DS versions of **Rayman Raving Rabbids TV Party**, **Shaun White Snowboarding**, and **Tomb Raider Underworld**, as well as the Wii version of **Neopets Puzzle Adventure**.... Effective touch-screen controls make Ubisoft's **Prince of Persia: The Fallen King** (DS) unlike any previous game in the franchise.... **Rune Factory 2: A Fantasy Harvest Moon** (DS) from Natsume adds another dose of combat to your favorite farming series.... EA's **Skate It** is very promising thanks to the inclusion of both Balance Board and Wii remote controls; there's a DS version, too.... Futuristic strategy in a World War III setting is what **Tom Clancy's EndWar** (DS) from Ubisoft is all about.... XS Games adds **Pop Star Guitar** (Wii) to the ever-growing rhythm-music genre, but the game had some response issues on the higher difficulty settings during our play test.... Speaking of music games, Activision's **Guitar Hero On Tour: Decades** (DS) picks up where its predecessor left off and adds 25 new songs.... Activision also has WWII shooter **Call of Duty: World at War**, action-platformer **Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa**, and beat-'em-up **Kung Fu Panda: Legendary Warriors** on the way. All three titles will be on both Wii and DS.... If you're looking for low-key yet relaxing puzzle games, The Game Factory's **Zenses: Oceans** and **Zenses: Rainforest** (both for DS) should be in stores now, and **Rubik's World** is headed to DS and Wii.... We received **The Legend of Spyro: Dawn of the Dragon** (Wii and DS) too late to give a proper review, but the Wii version was less than stellar in our short time with it.

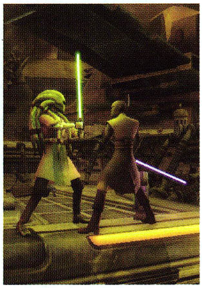
The Force Is Weak with This One

STAR WARS THE CLONE WARS: LIGHTSABER DUELS

RATING: **4.0**

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **LUCASARTS**
DEVELOPER: **KROME STUDIOS**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Admit it: the first time you heard about Wii's motion controls, you thought about wielding a lightsaber and dueling it out with your friends in a Star Wars game. Well, even if you didn't (and we *know* you did), the Wii remote is perfect for it—unless you're playing this game. Lightsaber Duels follows the story of the recently released *Clone Wars* movie and dumps you into each of the film's lightsaber battles. You'll play as a number of different characters, from Anakin to Obi-Wan, as you battle in one-on-one fights against the likes of Count Dooku and company.



While Lightsaber Duels maps the general motions of the remote to the lightsaber (swinging left makes you swing your lightsaber left, for instance), the combat system is simply too stiff and stilted to get a good rhythm going. This makes pulling off combos consistently more frustrating than it should be. Additionally, parrying an attack is way too difficult, requiring you to swing in the direction opposite the direction the enemy is swinging rather than employing a simpler button press.

Is this game a complete miss? Not entirely. The graphics are faithful to the movie, and the levels are filled with lots of moving parts and peripheral characters. And you do get to swing around a lightsaber. But the monotonous gameplay and lack of better controls (and the resulting frustration) make Lightsaber Duels hard to recommend, even for the kids. We'd love to see a Wii MotionPlus-enhanced version of this game, but until then, leave this one in a galaxy far, far away. **—KAISER H.**

[REVIEWS ARCHIVE]

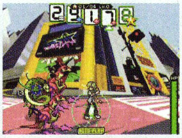
Games, Games, and More Games

For those who have been complaining that there haven't been a lot of games to play in the latter half of the year, check this out: nearly 30 games were reviewed last issue, and we reviewed about as many this issue. Suffice it to say, that's a lot of games. (OK, so the they're not necessarily the greatest games ever, but there are at least a handful of gems.)

SCORES REFLECT INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS' OPINIONS.
• INDICATES WI-FI COMPATIBLE

Wii				
TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Alone in the Dark	4.0	Atari	232	M
Backyard Baseball '09	N/A	Atari	231	E
Baroque	3.0	Atlus	227	T
Battle of the Bands	7.0	THQ	228	T
Blast Works: Build, Trade, Destroy	8.5	Majesco	229	E
Bomberman Land	5.0	Hudson	226	E
Boogie SuperStar	7.0	Electronic Arts	235	E10+
Boom Blox	8.0	Electronic Arts	229	E
Brothers in Arms: Double Time	7.0	Ubisoft	235	M
Bully: Scholarship Edition	8.5	Rockstar	227	T
Castle of Shikigami III	7.0	Aksys	228	T
Celebrity Sports Showdown	4.5	EA Sports	235	E
The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian	N/A	Disney	229	T
Crash: Mind over Mutant	N/A	Activision	235	E10+
CSI: Hard Evidence	N/A	Ubisoft	225	M
Dance Dance Revolution Hottest Party 2	8.0	Konami	234	E10+
de Blob	8.0	THQ	234	E
Death Jr.: Root of Evil	7.0	Eidos	230	T
Deca Sports	N/A	Hudson	229	E
Destroy All Humans! Big Willy Unleashed	7.0	THQ	227	T
Dokapon Kingdom	8.5	Atlus	235	E10+
Dragon Quest Swords: The Masked Queen and the Tower of Mirrors	7.0	Square Enix	226	T
Dream Pinball 3D	N/A	Southpeak	228	E10+
Emergency Heroes	N/A	Ubisoft	230	E10+
Emergency Mayhem	N/A	Codemasters	228	T
• Endless Ocean	7.5	Nintendo	225	E
FaceBreaker K.O. Party	5.0	Electronic Arts	235	T
Ferrari Challenge Trofeo Pirelli	7.5	System 3	233	E
FIFA Soccer 09 All-Play	7.5	Electronic Arts	235	E
Final Fantasy Fables: Chocobo's Dungeon	7.5	Square Enix	231	E10+
Furu Furu Park	N/A	Majesco	225	T
• Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	7.0	RedOctane	232	T
Harvest Moon: Tree of Tranquility	6.5	Natsume	233	E
The House of the Dead 2 & 3 Return	7.0	Sega	227	M
The Incredible Hulk	3.5	Sega	231	T
Iron Man	5.5	Sega	229	T
Jumper	N/A	Brash	226	T
Karaoke Revolution Presents American Idol Encore	N/A	Konami	226	E
Kidz Sports: Ice Hockey	N/A	Destineer	225	E
The King of Fighters: The Orochi Saga	8.0	SNK Playmore	235	T
Kung Fu Panda	N/A	Activision	230	E10+
LEGO Batman: The Videogame	7.0	Warner Bros.	235	E10+
LEGO Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	7.5	LucasArts	230	E10+
Line Rider 2: Unbound	5.0	Inxile	234	E
Little League World Series Baseball 2008	N/A	Activision	232	E
Lost in Blue: Shipwrecked	6.5	Konami	235	E10+
• Madden NFL 09 All-Play	9.0	Electronic Arts	232	E
• Mario Kart Wii	9.0	Nintendo	228	E
Mario Super Sluggers	7.5	Nintendo	233	E
MiniCopter: Adventure Flight	6.5	Aksys	228	E
MLB 2K8	6.5	2K Sports	227	E
MLB Power Pros 2008	7.0	2K Sports	232	E
My Horse and Me	N/A	Atari	225	E
MySims Kingdom	7.5	Electronic Arts	235	E
Naruto: Clash of Ninja Revolution 2	8.0	Tomy	235	T
• NBA Live 09 All-Play	4.0	Electronic Arts	234	E
NCAA Football 09 All-Play	5.0	Electronic Arts	232	E
NHL 2K9	7.0	2K Sports	234	E10+
Ninja Reflex	N/A	Electronic Arts	227	E10+
• Nitro Bike	3.5	Ubisoft	225	E10+
No More Heroes	8.0	Ubisoft	226	M
Obscure: The Aftermath	7.0	Ignition	227	M
Octomania	N/A	Conspiracy	227	E
Okami	7.5	Capcom	228	T
One Piece: Unlimited Adventure	6.5	Namco Bandai	225	T
Opoona	7.0	Koei	227	E10+
Order Up!	7.0	Zoo Games	232	E
Pinball Hall of Fame: The Williams Collection	7.5	Crave	227	E10+
• Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	N/A	Konami	227	E
• Quantum of Solace	N/A	Activision	235	T
Rock Band	8.0	MTV Games	231	T
Rock Band Track Pack Volume 1	6.5	MTV Games	232	T
Rock Revolution	4.5	Konami	235	T
Sam & Max Season One	7.0	The Adventure Company	233	T
• Samba de Amigo	9.0	Sega	234	E
Sega Bass Fishing	5.0	Sega	227	E
Sega Superstars Tennis	8.0	Sega	227	E10+
SimCity Creator	6.0	Electronic Arts	234	E
SNK Arcade Classics Vol. 1	8.5	SNK Playmore	233	T
• Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity	7.0	Sega	225	E
Space Chimps	N/A	Brash	231	E10+
Speed Racer	N/A	Warner Bros. Interactive	229	E
SPRay	3.0	Tecmo	235	E10+
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	7.5	LucasArts	233	T
Summer Sports: Paradise Island	3.5	Destineer	228	E
• Super Smash Bros. Brawl	10	Nintendo	226	T
Target: Terror	N/A	Konami	227	M
• Tiger Woods PGA Tour All-Play	8.5	Electronic Arts	233	E
TNA Impact!	5.0	Midway	235	T
Top Spin 3	7.0	2K Sports	229	E
Ultimate Band	6.0	Disney	235	E
WALL*E	N/A	THQ	231	E
Wario Land: Shake It!	8.0	Nintendo	234	E
We Cheer	6.0	Namco Bandai	235	E10+
• We Love Golf!	8.5	Capcom	231	E10+
We Ski	6.0	Namco Bandai	229	E
• Wii Music	N/A	Nintendo	235	E
Wild Earth: African Safari	N/A	Majesco	228	E
Worms: A Space Oddity	6.0	THQ	227	E10+
WWII Aces	3.0	Destineer	226	T
NINTENDO DS				
• Advance Wars: Days of Ruin	8.5	Nintendo	225	E10+
Apollo Justice: Ace Attorney	8.0	Capcom	226	T
Arkanoid DS	6.5	Square Enix	230	E
Assassin's Creed: Altair's Chronicles	7.5	Ubisoft	226	T

REVIEWER NOTES



THE WORLD ENDS WITH YOU

You have to hand it to Square Enix. They have, if nothing else, made one of the most innovative RPGs ever created with The World Ends with You. They've also concocted an awesome story. I'm not enamored with the battle system, though, despite plentiful combat options; controlling two characters at once is a pain, and the game often didn't recognize my touch-screen input. —**CHRIS H.**

KIRBY SUPER STAR ULTRA

I've always liked the Kirby games, and Kirby Super Star Ultra is probably my favorite so far. It's an upgraded version of an already great SNES game, and it's portable—what's not to like?

—**JUSTIN C.**

Wii MUSIC

I'm really impressed with Wii Music as an introduction to basic music composition, and I completely agree with Shigeru Miyamoto's assertion that the game is a great way to get kids interested in making music—I've seen it happen! My two-year-old daughter is fascinated by it, even if her random Wii remote shaking hasn't yet resulted in anything that sounds like a song. —**CHRIS SL.**

AWAY: Shuffle Dungeon	7.0	Majesco	235	E10+
Bangai-O Spirits	8.0	D3PA	232	E10+
Bleach: Dark Souls	8.5	Sega	234	T
• Bomberman Land Touch! 2	6.0	Hudson	225	E
Brain Challenge	N/A	Ubisoft	225	E
Brain Quest Grades 3 & 4	N/A	Electronic Arts	235	E
Brain Quest Grades 5 & 6	N/A	Electronic Arts	235	E
Brain Voyage	N/A	Eidos	228	E
Bratz: Super Babyz	N/A	THQ	226	E
Cake Mania 2	6.5	Majesco	230	E
Carnival Games	4.5	2K Games	231	E
Castlevania: Order of Ecclesia	8.0	Konami	235	T
The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian	N/A	Disney	229	E10+
Civilization Revolution	7.5	2K Games	231	E10+
Code Lyoko: Fall of Xana	N/A	The Game Factory	230	E
Commando: Steel Disaster	N/A	XS Games	229	E10+
Crash: Mind over Mutant	N/A	Activision	235	E
Crosswords DS	N/A	Nintendo	228	E
Disgaea DS	7.5	NIS America	233	T
Dragon Ball: Origins	7.0	Atari	235	E
Dragon Quest IV: Chapters of the Chosen	7.5	Square Enix	233	E10+
Drawn to Life: SpongeBob Squarepants Edition	7.0	THQ	234	E
Dream Pinball 3D	N/A	Southpeak	228	E10+
Drone Tactics	7.0	Atlus	229	E10+
Dungeon Explorer: Warriors of Ancient Arts	6.5	Hudson	226	T
Etrian Odyssey II: Heroes of Lagaard	8.5	Atlus	230	E10+
Exit DS	7.5	Square Enix	234	E
Ferrari Challenge Trofeo Pirelli	6.0	System 3	233	E
Final Fantasy IV	9.0	Square Enix	231	E10+
• Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fates	7.0	Square Enix	226	E10+
Final Fantasy Tactics A2: Grimoire of the Rift	7.0	Square Enix	230	E10+
• GRID	8.5	Codemasters	230	E
Guitar Hero: On Tour	8.0	RedOctane	232	E10+
Harvest Moon DS Cute	7.5	Natsume	226	E
Harvest Moon: Island of Happiness	7.0	Natsume	231	E
Homie Rollerz	N/A	Destineer	226	E
The Incredible Hulk	7.5	Sega	231	E10+
Insecticide	6.5	Gamecock	226	E10+
Iron Man	5.0	Sega	229	E10+
Izuna 2: The Unemployed Ninja Returns	5.0	Atlus	232	T
Jackass: The Game	N/A	Red Mile Entertainment	225	T
Jake Hunter: Detective Chronicles	5.0	Aksys	229	T
Kirby Super Star Ultra	9.0	Nintendo	234	E
Kung Fu Panda	N/A	Activision	230	E10+
The Legend of Kage 2	8.0	Square Enix	234	E10+
LEGO Batman: The Videogame	7.5	Warner Bros.	235	E10+
LEGO Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	7.5	LucasArts	230	E
Line Rider 2: Unbound	6.0	Inxile	234	E
Little League World Series Baseball 2008	N/A	Activision	232	E
Little Red Riding Hood's Zombie BBQ	5.0	Destineer	235	T
Lock's Quest	7.0	THQ	234	E
Looney Tunes: Cartoon Conductor	6.5	Eidos	230	E
Lost in Blue 3	5.5	Konami	227	E10+
Madden NFL 09	N/A	Electronic Arts	232	E
• Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games	7.5	Sega	225	E
Master of the Monster Lair	6.5	Atlus	235	E10+
• Mega Man Star Force 2	7.0	Capcom	230	E
Miami Nights: Singles in the City	N/A	Ubisoft	225	T
Mister Slime	6.0	Southpeak	230	E
MLB 2K8 Fantasy All-Stars	6.5	2K Sports	228	E
The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor	N/A	Vivendi Games	231	T
My Horse and Me	N/A	Atari	225	E
Myst	5.0	Empire Interactive	227	E
Mystery Case Files: MillionHeir	6.5	Nintendo	234	E
Mystery Dungeon: Shiren the Wanderer	6.5	Sega	226	E
• N+	7.0	Atari	228	E
Nancy Drew: The Mystery of the Clue Bender Society	N/A	Majesco	232	E10+
• Nanostray 2	6.0	Majesco	225	E
Naruto: Ninja Destiny	7.0	Tomy/D3PA	226	T
• Naruto: Path of the Ninja 2	6.5	Tomy	234	E10+
• New International Track and Field	8.0	Konami	232	E10+
Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword	8.5	Tecmo	227	T
Ninja Reflex	N/A	Electronic Arts	227	E10+
Ninjatown	8.0	SouthPeak	235	E
Petz: Bunnyz	N/A	Ubisoft	227	E
Petz Wild Animals: Tigerz	N/A	Ubisoft	227	E
• Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Darkness	7.5	Nintendo	229	E
• Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Time	7.5	Nintendo	229	E
Pop Cutie! Street Fashion Simulation	6.0	Koei	233	E
Populous	7.0	XSEED	234	T
• Prey the Stars	5.5	Koei	234	E10
Princess on Ice	N/A	Aksys	235	E
• Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	N/A	Konami	227	E
• Professor Layton and the Curious Village	8.5	Nintendo	225	E
Puchi Puchi Virus	7.0	NIS America	228	E
Puppy Palace	N/A	Ubisoft	225	E
Quantum of Solace	N/A	Activision	235	T
• River King: Mystic Valley	7.0	Natsume	225	E
Robocalypse	7.5	Tecmo	235	E10+
Rock Revolution	5.0	Konami	235	E10+
Rondo of Swords	6.5	Atlus	228	E10+
Sega Superstars Tennis	8.0	Sega	227	E
Shaun the Sheep	4.0	D3Publisher	235	E
Sonic Chronicles: The Dark Brotherhood	8.0	Sega	234	E
Soul Bubbles	6.5	Eidos	230	E
Space Chimps	N/A	Brash	231	E
Space Invaders Extreme	8.0	Square Enix	230	E
• Spectrobes: Beyond the Portals	8.0	Disney	235	E10+
Speed Racer	N/A	Warner Bros. Interactive	229	E
Spore Creatures	8.0	Electronic Arts	234	E
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	6.0	LucasArts	233	T
Summon Night: Twin Age	7.5	Atlus	229	E10+
Super Dodgeball Brawlers	6.5	Aksys	229	E
Tamagotchi Connection: Corner Shop 3	N/A	Namco Bandai	230	E
• Tecmo Bowl: Kickoff	6.0	Tecmo	235	E
Teenage Zombies: Invasion of the Alien Brain Thingys	7.0	Ignition	228	E10+
Theresia	N/A	Aksys	235	M
Time Hollow	7.0	Konami	234	T
Top Spin 3	6.0	2K Sports	229	E
Tornado	6.0	Ignition	234	E
Transformers Animated: The Game	7.0	Activision	235	E
Trauma Center: Under the Knife 2	8.5	Atlus	231	T
Unsolved Crimes	4.5	Empire	234	T
• Viva Piñata: Pocket Paradise	7.0	THQ	234	E
WALL*E	N/A	THQ	231	E
What's Cooking? Jamie Oliver	N/A	Atari	235	E
• The World Ends With You	9.0	Square Enix	228	T
Zoo Tycoon 2 DS	7.0	THQ	226	E

NARUTO: CLASH OF NINJA REVOLUTION 2

Naruto: Clash of Ninja Revolution 2 is not going to look very different to anyone who played the first Clash of Ninja Revolution game, but if it ain't broke, why fix it? Clash of Ninja Revolution 2 has solid fighting mechanics with a some great new additions, a good variety of characters, and a brand-new story to play through. The game is worth playing whether you're a fan of the anime or not. —**TOM H.**

BOOM BLOX

> ***Boom Blox is a fantastic gem of a puzzle game. The physics-based gameplay allows for some of the best use of the Wii controls yet, and the amount of content in the game is almost endless.***
>
> —**CHRIS H.**

RHAPSODY: A MUSICAL ADVENTURE

While Rhapsody may not necessarily be the best RPG on DS right now (in fact, the gameplay is pretty standard overall), the game is packed with enough humor and charm to warrant a second look. Sadly, the music—which you would assume would be awesome given that this is supposed to be "A Musical Adventure"—is just so-so. Also unfortunate is that some gamers have experienced glitches, so be sure to save often just in case. —**JUSTIN C.**

Let's face it, if BURGER KING® food and a Wii™ system don't bring your family together this holiday season, nothing will.

BK® CROWN CARD
Wii

Give the gift of a BK® Crown Card this holiday season and you could instantly win a Wii™ system for fun with your family. Collect all 4 great new holiday BK® Crown Cards with your favorite Nintendo characters and let the togetherness begin. **www.bkcrowncard.com**

Wii
BK® CROWN CARD

HAVE IT YOUR WAY®

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Open to legal residents of the US, 18 or older. To get one (1) free Game Piece by mail, send a hand-printed, self-addressed, postage-stamped #10 envelope to: Wii™ BK® Crown Card Game Official Game Piece Request, P.O. Box 1228, Elmhurst, IL 60126-1228, postmarked by 1/04/09 & received by 1/12/09. Residents of Vermont may omit return postage. Game ends 1/04/09 or when supplies are exhausted. Official Rules posted in restaurants and at www.burgerking.com. Void where prohibited.
TM & © 2008 Burger King Brands, Inc. All rights reserved. Wii is a trademark of Nintendo.

SUPER PAPER MARIO

Bring the whole family together and activate your playtime with BK® Kids Meals and Wii-inspired toys*. 10 toys in all, one per Kids Meal. Now at BK®.

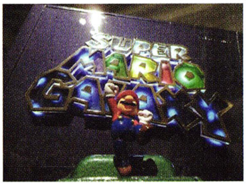
HERSHEY'S
Lowfat
MILK

*At participating restaurants. For a limited time. While supplies last.
Nintendo characters are properties of Nintendo. ©2008 Nintendo.

MOD JOB

Master Modder

We chat with amazing Wii and DS modder Ramon Stokes.



We've seen a lot of Mario case mods lately, but this is one of the best.

Twenty-six-year-old Ramon Stokes redefines do-it-yourself. As the president, lead designer, and senior fabricator of Morpheon Mods—hands-down one of the best console-modding operations in existence—his works transcend the typical homegrown look of fan-made console modifications. Rather, each piece looks professionally designed and manufactured—so much so that it's hard to believe they're one-of-a-kind, handmade projects. As if his modding skills aren't enough, he's also quite the philanthropist: he donates 15% of every sale directly to the Child's Play charity, an organization that helps improve the lives of young children in hospitals through games (check www.childsplaycharity.org for more info). Due to his growing list of high-profile clients and a number of secret projects that we simply can't talk about (you wouldn't believe us if we told you), we couldn't resist contacting Ramon and getting a little inside info on the life of a master modder. Check out his work, even commission your own, at http://morpheonmods.blogspot.com/.

NINTENDO POWER Can you tell us a little about yourself, and how you got started in the console-modding business?

RAMON STOKES Well, I have always been really creative. As a kid, nothing I had was safe. I was always adding or changing something to make it my own. Of course, LEGOs were a major part of my childhood, but as I got older the glue gun and electrical tape became my favorite tools. In college I became heavily involved with computer modding, skipping a spring-break trip to Miami to install a DIY water-cooling system. But it wasn't until I stumbled upon an exact replica of Link's Master Sword and Shield that I found my niche. The set was the perfect scale to mount on the Wii, so pairing them was a completely natural combination. The Zelda Wii was an amazing success, with over 80,000 views on eBay from 35 countries, and over 60 Web reviews. It was then I knew we had something, and our growth since has been astonishing. The Internet can be a fickle place, but thankfully we have yet to disappoint.

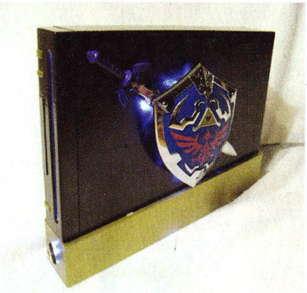
Your consoles are a definite step above the typical DIY mod in terms of quality and materials. Is everything handmade?

In one way or another, yes. It really all depends on what I'm making and what tools would be best suited for the job. With our Metroid Wii, the Screw Attack emblem had to be made from aluminum and had many, many complex angles. For it to look as accurate as possible, we had to fabricate this entirely by hand. But for things like the Super Mario Galaxy logo on the Mario Galaxy Wii, we draft it in AutoCAD, have it laser-cut in stainless steel, and hand-polish it. Other times I sculpt the 3-D elements from PVC clay and make molds for things like Lumas. It would be impossible to take it that "extra step" without the amazing fabricators and artists I have found along the way to help bring my ideas to life. Ultimately, I believe that's what sets us apart.

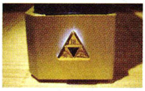
Have you had any big-name clients?

We have been incredibly lucky to have been received so positively by the community, and that has garnered us a large amount of attention from people in the mainstream. We have done commissioned works for Rockstar Games, THQ, Ready at Dawn, and director/actor Kevin Smith, to name a few, and we are in talks with Amazon.com for something really special. Many times when working with bigger clients we aren't allowed to show the work to the public, and that's the only downside, but the excitement and the people you meet makes it a more-than-worthy trade-off.

As cool as these mods are, we should point out that some kinds of modifications will void your warranty. You've been warned!



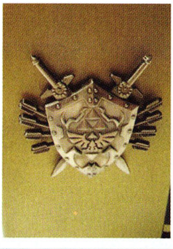
It all started when Stokes saw this sword and shield.



Let's say we wanted to commission our own console. What price range would we be looking at?
Commissioned works have been made for as little as two hundred dollars but can range into the thousands. It all depends on what the customer envisions the final product [to be]. There could be many areas of work on a mod, including painting, sculpting, metal work, electrical, cutting and redesigning the case. This adds up to many hours of work, especially when every mod brings its own unexpected challenges during the final assembly, and it's why we do *not* charge by the hour—they would be way too expensive otherwise. I encourage anyone wanting something made, specific or not, to visit the website and shoot us an email. Our mods will never be only for the rich, and because it's something we love to do, we strive to make our services accessible to anyone.

Given the number of Nintendo mods you've made, is it safe to assume that you're a big Nintendo fan?
It's true—I am a fanboy to the bone. I am a sucker for almost anything with Mario or Link. I still have the bed sheets to prove it—but no longer use them! The first set of moving pixels I ever laid eyes on was Super Mario Bros. and I was hooked immediately, and remain so to this day. Being an only child in a single-parent household, those games hold a special place in my heart because my mom shared the same enthusiasm and we would often play the newest Mario or Zelda together when I was young. I have an immense amount of respect for Miyamoto, which is why we dedicated the Galaxy Wii to him with an engraving on the unit.

Any advice for all your fellow modders out there?
Well, the first thing I would suggest is to really let your imagination run wild, because if you can envision it, chances are there's a way to fabricate it. Don't be afraid to ask for help. One of the biggest surprises for me has been how many nongamers love what we do and how many serious craftsmen are willing and excited to explain how to design or create something. Most importantly, take your time and use that suggested primer or add that extra coat of paint, because you will forget about that additional time it took you when you have a great end result to stare at for years to come.



ABOVE *and* BEYOND

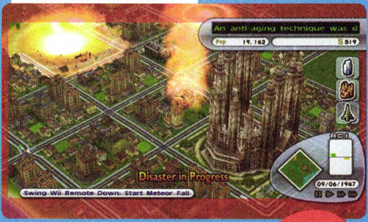
Got art, cosplay, case mods, etc.? Send them to us via email to **community@nintendopower.com** or via snail mail to Nintendo Power/Community c/o Future US, 1000 Marina Blvd., Suite 510, Brisbane, CA 94005. We'll run the best stuff in this section.

WRITE YOUR OWN CAPTION

Screen Test

The first thing readers noticed was the Rubik's Cube in Volume 234's Target Terror screenshot. Very keen observation, readers! Of course, there were some other creative captions, too, which you can check out below. This month, we're taking the action to a citywide scale. Don't bail out just yet, though—send your best captions to **screentest@nintendopower.com** first.

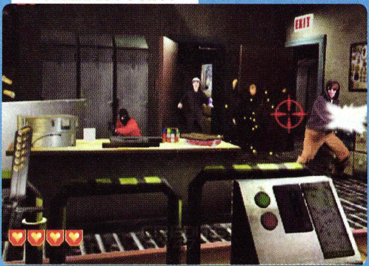
THIS MONTH'S SHOT


An anti-aging technique was d
Pop 19,162
$519
RCI
Disaster in Progress
Swing Wii Remote Down: Start Meteor Fall
09/06/1947

Little did people know that the anti-aging technique used Kryptonian technology.

HERE'S OUR CAPTION. THINK YOU CAN DO BETTER?

VOLUME 234'S SHOT



"I'm sorry—were you guys trying to finish that Rubik's Cube? I'll come back later!" —CWK129

"Moments before releasing Kao the Kangaroo 3, the NP crew burst in to end the marsupial's career once and for all." —ERIC O.

"And then the surprise party went horribly wrong...." —CHRISTA

"So THAT'S what this button does." —WAFFLE KILLER

"You three get out of my way—I've got a date with a plate of brownies!" —ARCHIE S.

JANUARY 2009 ◆ VOL. 237

NEXT MONTH

Happy New Year! We'll show you why 2009 is going to be a banner year for Nintendo fans with titles like The Conduit, Sonic and the Black Knight, Major Minor's Majestic March, Wii Sports Resort, and, yes, a few surprises.

Nintendo Power (ISSN 1041-9551) is published 13 times a year, monthly plus Holiday issue following December issue, by Future US, Inc., 4000 Shoreline Court, Suite 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080. Application to mail at Periodicals Postage Rates is pending at South San Francisco, CA and additional mailing offices. Ride-Along Enclosure: None. Standard Mail Enclosure: None. Subscriptions: One year basic rate (12 issues): US: $24.95; Canada $29.95. Canadian orders must be prepaid in US funds only. Canadian price includes postage and GST (GST# R128220688). Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement #40043631. Returns: 4960-2 Walker Road, Windsor, ON N9A 6J3. For customer service write to: Nintendo Power Customer Care, PO Box 5770, Harlan, IA 51593-1270, or call: 1(866) 941-8368 in the US. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Nintendo Power, P.O. Box 5770, Harlan, IA 51593-1270. Entire contents copyright 2008, Future US, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part is prohibited. Produced and printed in the United States.

CRASH®
MIND OVER MUTANT
UNLEASH MUTANT FURY!
Take control of powerful mutants
2-person co-op play with CoCo
Battle using Crash's signature fighting style
AVAILABLE NOW!

www.Crashbandicoot.com

Wii NINTENDO DS XBOX 360 LIVE

EVERYONE 10+™
Cartoon Violence
Crude Humor
Mild Suggestive Themes
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

PlayStation 2 PSP PlayStation Portable RADICAL ENTERTAINMENT ACTIVISION

activision.com

© 2008 Sierra Entertainment, Inc. Crash, Crash Bandicoot, Sierra and the Sierra logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Sierra Entertainment, Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries and Activision is a registered trademark of Activision Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. Radical Entertainment is a registered trademark or trademark of Radical Entertainment Inc. in Canada, the U.S. and/or other jurisdictions. "PlayStation", "PS" Family logo and "PSP" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Memory Stick Duo™ may be required (sold separately). Wii and Nintendo DS are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license from Microsoft. All other trademarks are property of their respective owners.

SONIC UNLEASHED™
THE DIFFERENCE IS NIGHT AND DAY
www.sonic-unleashed.com
SONIC TEAM
SEGA®
www.sega.com
EVERYONE 10+
E 10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Animated Blood
Fantasy Violence
XBOX 360® LIVE
PlayStation®2
Wii
PLAYSTATION 3

© SEGA. SEGA is registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. SEGA, the SEGA logo, the SONIC TEAM logo, and SONIC UNLEASHED are either registered trademarks or trademarks of SEGA Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license from Microsoft. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION" and "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association. All other trademarks are owned by their respective owners.

Made with love by

RETROMAGS

Our goal is to preserve classic video game magazines so that they are not lost permanently.

People interested in helping out in any capacity, please visit us at retromags.com.

No profit is made from these scans, nor do we offer anything available from the publishers themselves.

If you come across anyone selling releases from this site, please do not support them and do let us know.

Thank you!